

- ROVER BLOOD

"A BOY AND HIS DOG."

1.

ROVER BLOOD

FADE IN

1. EXT HOLE DAY

Trash. Junk. Dried mud. Discarded furniture, rags, rotting drapes. Ripped and scattered cardboard, newspapers, magazines, burned lumber. MUSIC is light, fragile, an unusual dance step. HOLD until conscious of movement. A small lizard - electric blue and green, obviously unlike any creature alive today, an atomic mutation - scuttles through the debris, pauses. MUSIC stops, stillness falls like a curtain. Soft wind. PAN the creature as it slithers. In counterpoint, HEAR a WOMAN'S VOICE speaking with feigned bedroom passion, underlined with fear.

WOMAN o.s.

... oh, lover ... come on, lover ...

2. ANGLE

Lizard scurries over small mound of rubbish, nervously pauses to test the air, attempts to dart away as a booted foot crushes down.

WOMAN o.s.

Oh Jesus, lover, don't kill me ... don't ...

CONT.

2. CONTINUED

A shot. Another. Then more ... spaced apart as though someone is taking his time doing an unspeakable act. As shots sound, TILT UP from boot to show VIC cautiously easing himself along on his knees amid the rubble. Indifferently having crushed the lizard, his main attention is again on something o.s. as he picks his way.

VIC is 20, going on fifty. He's rangy, and though he has neither beard nor character lines in his face, he looks deadly competent - the look we see in Matthew Brady photographs of teen-aged soldiers in the Civil War, the look of the jungle predator, the look of the scavenger, the adult-before-his-time look we see on the faces of ghetto kids who've had to live by their wits. He's got 2 bandoliers of shells crossed over his shoulders; he's got a .45 holstered in a shoulder rig; he's got a knife sheathed at his side; he's got a "sap" protruding from his boot; and he has his 30.06 rifle (probably a Husquvarna) cradled, ready.

3. ANGLE

He picks his way in a huge hole blasted or gouged or dug in what was at one time a solid mass of dried, yellow-brown-red mud. Mashed, misshapen, out-of-place items caught in this press and revealed by the digging jut out of the walls like a giant surrealist portrait. A car. Desk top. Baby carriage. The hole bottoms with several homes that are more or less upright and have been entered through a window, wall, roof - whichever digging revealed. Household items discarded because of no use or understanding litter the area. VIC'S experience with these surroundings allows his progress on whispered feet.

4. ANGLE

PAN as he quietly snakes his way to a huge pile of debris that blots out anything beyond and begins to slide around its right flank.

BLOOD o.s. FILTER OVER

Left.

The voice of BLOOD is cool, used to command ... unmistakable. Immediately responding, VIC slides back across the face of the debris. DOLLY IN, HOLD VIC in f.g., DRIFT WITH him to cautiously peer around. Desolation that spreads before us appears quiet, still, lifeless. Become conscious

CONT.

4. CONTINUED

of another figure, some 50 feet ahead, crouched behind a smaller mound, stalking something in front of him. EASE BACK with VIC as he ponders this new development. He starts to slide his knife out, changes his mind, withdraws a sling-shot, locates a large, solid chunk of rubble, cases out, aims. A soft "thunk" and the other figure slumps over on his rifle. VIC wriggles to the fallen foe.

5. ANGLE

VIC makes it to the out-cold body, eases up to peer over the mound. A 100 feet away ... a shack, figure squat/leaning against its front, rifle resting carelessly, but close. In the distance, gunfire erupts - too far away to concern VIC or the figure. Silence, stillness. VIC keeps his eyes on the figure at the shack, rifle ready, and with his free hand proceeds to disarm the body at his feet and to search its pockets. There ain't much. Finally, a lump of dirty, mouldy, dry cheese-like substance. He strips off some of the worst part, divides the remainder in 2 equal parts, idly chews away at his half as he watches the shack and waits. A little closer, a dog barks.

BLOOD o.s. FILTER OVER
They're coming out. Flatten !

VIC plasters himself to the ground. The shack's front door swings open and 3 ROVERS exit to join the guard. One buckles his belt, another, in his shorts, carries his pants in his hand, puts them on. The ROVERS, in their early teens, laugh among themselves as all 4 move away. They are heavily armed.

NOTE: ROVERS - Men/boys, never women. Oldest, 23. All are heavily armed, dressed in whatever is at hand ... constantly alert.

Solos - Single Rover, with/without dog companion.

VIC watches them well away, starts to rise.

BLOOD o.s. FILTER OVER
Don't tumble ! Two hanging back ...
and a mutt.

VIC flattens again. Another ROVER slides through the front door. Staying close to the wall, he moves to the right hand

CONT.

5. CONTINUED

side of the shack, makes certain everything is safe, moves back past the front door to check the other side. Satisfied, he moves after his 4 friends. He is joined by another ROVER and a mean looking guard DOG that have been doing the same checking at the rear of the shack. VIC does not move, HEAR movement. VIC snaps his gaze to the sound, back to the ROVERS. A large dog bellies up next to VIC.

VIC FILTER OVER

We'll take a look.

BLOOD FILTER OVER

So we'll take a look.

They rise, ease toward the shack.

NOTE: You read right - the dog talks. In that unmistakable voice. He does not talk the way a TV talking horse talks, nor with animated mouth. Telepathically. VIC and BLOOD are linked mentally, and when they converse, they do it in FILTER OVER. Sometimes VIC speaks vocally, but when VIC and BLOOD are engaged in heavy conversation, VIC can either talk aloud or in his head. BLOOD'S tones are usually very wise, very bored, very much above it all. He's intelligent, and has a sense of his own worth that makes much of what he hears and sees not even worth commenting on. He is a joker in that he has a gallows sense of humor, and he is a realist, even as VIC.

6. ANGLE

They approach the shack carefully. VIC looks through a break in the door. Windows are boarded. He looks at BLOOD.

VIC FILTER OVER

I can't see a thing in there. Smell it, willya?

The dog looks back at him and blinks. BLOOD is a weird looking animal - big, floppy. He can be very dangerous, but his appearance is a cross between a dinosaur and a Walt Disney cutie.

BLOOD FILTER OVER

I thought you were doing the scouting.

VIC FILTER OVER

Dammit, Blood, don't give me a hard time. Smell it !

CONT.

5.

6. CONTINUED

The dog heaves a sigh, closes his eyes. A beat, looks at VIC.

BLOOD FILTER OVER

It's clean. Just the chick.

VIC pushes the door open with his rifle.

7. INT SHACK DAY

Dim, piled with refuse. Naked WOMAN lies on a plank table, arms and legs spread-eagled and lashed to the legs of the table. Because of the angle, we cannot see all of the body, but blood runs down one of the limp arms. She is obviously dead.

VIC FILTER OVER

Ain't that a shame.

BLOOD FILTER OVER

Better luck next time.

VIC FILTER OVER

Yeah.

BLOOD loses interest, pads through the front door.

8. EXT SHACK DAY

BLOOD eases out, checks, settles on his haunches. He's hardly touched his bottom down when VIC exits the shack, picks his way through the rubble, headed off. BLOOD trots after. HOLD their progress and the front door of the shack. A SOLO who has been waiting off some distance, gives them a wide berth, sprints to the shack, enters. VIC and BLOOD pick their way up the debris, moving towards the top of the hole. Another SOLO darts from behind camera into the shack. A fight, cursing, a couple of shots erupt from its darkened interior.

9. ANGLE

CLOSER. VIC and BLOOD stride the last few feet of the sloping sides, peer cautiously over the rim, turning a 360 sweep.

VIC FILTER OVER

That's what I call a waste. They didn't haveta kill her. She could of been used 2,3 more times.

CONT.

9. CONTINUED

BLOOD FILTER OVER

War is hell, Vic.

BOOM UP, CONTINUE RISING over them as they move out on a sea of dried mud and debris that is the Alpha and Omega of urban destruction. A trumpet intro leads CHORUS and ORCHESTRA into a stirring rendition of "America." Holes like the one they have just vacated pock the flat of the sea of dried mud as far as the eye can see. A row of telephone poles, only a foot or so above the surface and stripped of their wires and insulators with a few crossbars askance, march their lonely way across the expanse and disappear into a wave of the dried crud. Part of a leaning television tower points a rusty finger to the horizon. Assorted items washed here by the tidal wave of mud and then trapped in an inescapable grip of hardening dot the area. Washing machine. Cars. Wood. Concrete blocks. Tin sheets. Plaster. Glass. Papers, rags, bones. Filth.

10. SUBLIMINAL

Railroad locomotives half buried. Twisted rails. Box cars. Switches. Cow catcher. A lonely lantern.

11. SUBLIMINAL

Twisted hulk of rusted auto. Frame of baby's auto seat.

12. BACK TO SHOT

VIC and BLOOD pick their way, getting smaller. MUSIC continues.

13. SUBLIMINAL

Corner of house, folded flat as pancake, leans into the sky.

14. SUBLIMINAL

Flat, unbroken dried mud. Easy chair, dipping on broken leg. End table, side smashed, nestling close.

15. ANGLE

VIC and BLOOD. Far off to their left, the murdering party of ROVERS on its way. MUSIC ends. Soft wind. BOOM UP HIGH. HOLDING EVERYTHING. VIC and BLOOD smaller and smaller. The ROVERS so small they're almost dots. Two other SOLOS, totally

CONT.

15. CONTINUED

independent of and unaware of each other, work their way as quickly as they safely can toward the hole VIC has just left ... and the dead WOMAN.

CUT TO:

ROVER BLOOD
(Lead Titles)

CUT TO:

16. EXT RIVERBANK DAY

Same destruction, heaps of debris. Little more color than normal. Small wildflowers keep their weak life going. HEAR soft lap/lap of water, PAN to HOLD heavy growth of bushes in immediate f.g. Soft rustling of greenery pulls us to BLOOD, poking around, investigating, and finding what he was looking for. At first it seems he's about to fall over sideways - he steadies himself, begins to get a dreamy look about the eyes. BLOOD finds bathrooms everywhere.

NOTE: From this point, when telepathic communication is indicated, FILTER OVER will be written simply as FO. If FO does not appear, it will indicate the speech is spoken ALOUD.

BLOOD FO

You're funny when you get horny.

VIC

Funny enough to kick you upside your butt. I said find ! I ain't kiddin' !

17. ANGLE

DOLLY as they move along. Seemingly relaxed, they're not.

BLOOD FO

For shame, Albert. Not "ain't kidding.
I'm not ..."

VIC brandishes the rifle like a club.

VIC

Find, dog meat. And stop calling me Albert. My name's Vic and you know it damn ...

CONT.

17. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO
(hurt)

You'd club a poor, defenseless animal?
You're not a good person, Albert.

The dog pauses a moment, taunting VIC. Losing out on the glaring contest, BLOOD flops down, shakes to a comfortable position. VIC squats beside his buddy.

18. ANGLE

BLOOD'S hairy body tenses. Fascinated as always by this ritual, VIC leans in to watch his dog work.

BLOOD FO
Considering selling tickets?

The boy realizes he should be standing guard, not gawking, moves to circle the area, EXIT. BLOOD settles forward on his front paws, scrapes them forward till he is lying flat, his shaggy head on the outstretched paws. The tenseness leaves him and he begins trembling. Slight SOUND of telepathic seeking.

19. ANGLE

VIC circles, watching. Quiet.

20. ANGLE

BLOOD. Seeking.

21. ANGLE

VIC moving, searching ... sound drifts to him. He turns to it.

22. POV

BLOOD, busy, out of it. Beyond the dog so far that he appears as stick figure, SOLO running for his life. A beat, and a party of 3 ROVERS give hot pursuit. SOLO trips, goes down hard, and the ROVERS are on him. They stomp the fight out of him, strip him of what they want, wander off leaving him in a heap. SOUNDS of the scuffle wash in, away, die out. BLOOD has heard nothing.

23. BACK TO VIC

Satisfied there is no danger, he continues his vigil, finally

CONT.

23. CONTINUED

moves to kneel beside his friend.

24. ANGLE

BLOOD breathes hard, eyes open. He licks his chops, sits up, stares at VIC.

BLOOD FO

I detect nothing, sir. I have cast and I have sniffed, sir. I get a negative reading, sir. There are no living female persons within my range ... sir.

VIC would like to boot him, but the dog has tried. The boy accepts the bad news, sucks on his teeth, considers.

BLOOD FO

Polly's earned a cracker ... sir.

VIC fixes his dog with the baleful stare of a taxpayer facing his IRS auditor, worries food sack he carries slung over his shoulder where he can get a hand in, and pulls out air. Gropes again, same results. They'll have to get some.

VIC FO

Wanta hustle?

BLOOD FO

Nah, I'm hungry. Let's make a withdrawal.

VIC shrugs agreement, moves off. BLOOD checks their rear, shuffles after.

CUT TO:

25. EXT CITY DAY

A little worse than usual. Not far away, a steaming bomb crater gives off an eerie disease-green glow of radiation, a sore that continues to fester. This area was a direct hit, and most of the building materials that once were stores or homes have been reduced to lumps or bear burn marks deep in their flesh. It is here they have located their reserve supplies and food. The cache is now open while VIC kneels and withdraws needed items. BLOOD maintains safety watch.

CONT.

25. CONTINUED

VIC

Why do you always call me ...
what the hell's this?

He peers closely at one of the cans taken from the cache.
BLOOD ambles close, peers over his shoulder.

BLOOD FO

Succotash. S, u, c, c, ...

VIC

I can read, dammit. I mean, what
is it?

BLOOD FO

Oh. It's a God-awful mixture of ...

Without definite movement, BLOOD'S attention is no longer on
the conversation. He's heard something, is trying to pin
what and where. DOLLY to move VIC into f.g., BLOOD to b.g.

VIC

Well, c'mon brain, what ...

Sounds of movement drift in. With as little stir as
possible, VIC slides any valuables that would show and his
pistol into the cache, covers them as good as possible,
sinks into an exaggerated pose of indifference. BLOOD
folds himself on the ground, head on paws. Noise has con-
tinued to grow, now precedes 2 ROVERS into view, travelling
past in the far b.g. A step or two into view, and they have
spotted VIC and BLOOD. This slows their progress, does not
stop them. VIC and BLOOD seem almost unaware of this new
presence and threat, yet their eyes tell us they are ready
for anything ... rifle close.

VIC FO

Why do you call me Albert when you
know it'll annoy me?

BLOOD FO

You wouldn't understand.

VIC FO

Why wouldn't I?

BLOOD FO

Because, essentially, Vic, you're stupid.

CONT.

25. CONTINUED

ROVERS continue to ease on by. One detaches himself and begins to move slowly toward VIC and BLOOD, studying them. They continue their conversation ... VIC'S hand inches closer to his rifle.

VIC FO

Don't talk to me like that. I can read,
I can do figures, I even know history.

BLOOD FO

Only because I taught you. If it weren't
for me, Vic, you'd be like any other solo.

The lone ROVER covers half the distance that separates them, stops, considers ... turns to rejoin his friend.

ROVER #1

Good looking rifle.

ROVERS slow to a stop, consider terrain, lack of surprise, what's to be gained. VIC and BLOOD tense.

ROVER #2

Nah. Not worth the trouble.

ROVERS drift on, easing to the left, and out of sight. VIC and BLOOD ... relax. VIC digs his pistol out of the cache, shoves a bedraggled croquet ball out of the way, paws through a collection of stored items and canned food trying to figure what to take, what to leave.

VIC

You're a dog. What the hell d'you
know ?!

BLOOD FO

I know you need me to find girls. And
I know you wouldn't last ten ...

From THEIR RIGHT, the air is suddenly full of flying junk. No sooner have the cans and rocks and auto parts and ball bearings and refrigerator shelves pelted down on them than 3 ROVERS burst screaming, firing, throwing, and rushing at them. From THEIR LEFT, the 2 PASSING ROVERS re-enter the fray. BLOOD snarls his defiance as he digs in. VIC scrambles, stumbling over canned goods, croquet balls, thrown junk, manages to get off a couple of ineffectual shots. ROVERS, pressing their

CONT.

25. CONTINUED

surprise attack to the hilt, rush in - first this one, then that one - ducking, firing, throwing, yelling, moving. Realizing they don't have a chance, VIC scoops up what he can with one hand, fires his rifle with the other, and begins leaving the cache with little grace but all sorts of speed. BLOOD is not far behind. ROVERS immediately forget the retreating pair, post a guard, and proceed to help themselves to the goodies.

26. ANGLE

In the distance, PAN VIC and BLOOD as they hustle away from the danger.

27. ANGLE

CONTINUE PAN as they scamper. In f.g., 3 PAIRS OF LEGS slide into view. HOLD them SCREEN RIGHT. VIC and BLOOD have angled away and are held in the b.g. SEE no higher than the knees of the 3 PAIRS OF LEGS. PAIR #1 wears striped overalls, heavy work shoes. PAIR #2, striped overalls, spats, light dress shoes, carries a cane with which he flicks a bit of gunk off of a spotless shine. PAIR #3, blue serge, yellow stripe down side, heavy walking shoes.

#1

Well?

#2

Don't know.

#1

Checked out cracker-jack to here.
Think he just might do.

#2

Mebbe.

VIC and BLOOD are still on the run.

#1

'The don't pass the tests, easy to
"remove" him. Be one less animal
to fight off.

#2

I reckon.

CUT TO:

28. EXT DRIED MUD LATE AFTERNOON

VIC and BLOOD still on the run, beginning to drag. VIC'S tired legs fail, he goes down. BLOOD moves a bit farther, climbs a sheet of tin, pieces of ripped wire, wood, to get a vantage point. He moves back to VIC who is sucking wind like a wheezy intake valve.

BLOOD FO

Clear.

Both use the time to get breath, bearings.

BLOOD FO

As I so succinctly noted in lecture 67, Albert, "man who puts all goodies in one basket and gets raided ends up starving." As does his trustworthy, courteous, kind, loyal friend.

VIC is barely getting enough air.

VIC

Allright, alright !

A hungry, wheezy-breath silence.

BLOOD FO

Did you, by some accident, manage to save anything ... Albert?

For first time, VIC notices he has managed to hold on to one item, holds it out for BLOOD'S inspection. The dog practically throws up as he reads the label.

BLOOD FO

Succotash.

VIC slits the can top with his knife.

VIC FO

If you'da kept your eyes open 'stead of motormouthing 'bout how much I needed ya we'd have something better ...

BLOOD FO

All right !!

VIC shakes his share out in his hand, sits the can in front of

CONT.

28. CONTINUED

his friend who turns his head away as though he's going to be sick.

BLOOD FO

God, I hate succotash.

The boy continues to suck his helping up, lick his fingers, make all sorts of noises of enjoyment.

BLOOD FO

However ...

He proceeds to vacuum up his portion in one gulp. The repast, if not sumptuous, is something. Danger is nowhere near, the sunset is gorgeous. They enjoy.

CUT TO:

29. EXT DRIED MUD NIGHT

Lightning crackles, thunder rolls, rain hammers down. They are right in the middle of God's nowhere, hunkered under a 4 foot piece of tin while the elements try to drown them.

30. ANGLE

Boy and dog, huddled so close they seem one, while the flood continues. To pass the time,

BLOOD FO

I call you Albert after Albert
Payson Terhunc.

VIC, rain trickling off nose on to chest, chooses to let it pass.

BLOOD FO

He wrote dog stories, about eighty
years ago.

VIC percolates that for a while.

VIC FO

That's dumb.

BLOOD tastes a little quiet.

CONT.

30. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

I thought you'd think so.

The rain hammers, it's almost impossible to hear. VIC mumbles something; BLOOD doesn't catch, or doesn't want to.

BLOOD FO

What ?!

VIC

I said it annoys me, damn it !

BLOOD FO

That's why I do it !!

And they are screaming at one another.

VIC

Why are you always so crummy to me, Blood? I thought we was friends !!

BLOOD FO

"Were," damn it, not "was" ! We are friends, Vic ! But sometimes I find it difficult to contain my hostilities toward you. I'm dependent on you, even as you are on me, and I resent it sometimes ! You or me ?!!

VIC

Me !!

31. ANGLE

VIC throws himself out from under the inadequate cover, take guard duty. BLOOD finds what dry area he can.

BLOOD FO

Good night !!!

VIC

Good night !!!!!

CUT TO:

32. EXT DRIED MUD MORNING

BLOOD, rain soaked and cold, atop the tin sheet, on guard.

CONT.

32. CONTINUED

VIC, a tightly curled knot in mud, fights to sleep. Slate-gray of the clouds fights the early morning sun. Mumbling and bitching to himself, VIC stirs, sits, fumbles with food sack, remembers it's empty. Bitches. Moves to wash his mouth out with the leavings of the succotash. That's filled with rain. Heaves the can, lumbers back to sit in the mud under the shelter and bitch some more.

33. ANGLE

They continue to ignore each other, studiously. Very quietly,

BLOOD FO

There's a better way, you know.

Eventually, that brings a look of disbelief from VIC.

BLOOD FO

"Over the hill."

VIC FO

"Over the hill" my ass.

Each nudges his own thoughts.

BLOOD FO

When are we going?

VIC FO

Soon as I get my heart started.

34. ANGLE

BLOOD FO

I mean ...

VIC

I know what you mean, God damn it !
"Over the hill, where the deer and the antelope play, and it's warm, and clean, and you can relax, and have fun, and a place to sleep...and they magically grow food right out of the ground...and how do you like that pipe dream, folks ??

BLOOD FO

That's right, smart ass. That's exactly what they do. It's called farming.

CONT.

34. CONTINUED

VIC

Oh, I believe ya ! They also grow a big crop of clothes and guns and gorgeous chicks ! Now tell me how you saw the whole wonderful thing with your own baby blue eyes !

BLOOD FO

Never said that. Said I heard.

VIC

Yeah, and from who ???!

BLOOD FO

"From whom," jackass. And you know from whom !

VIC

And "whom" the hell's gonna believe a police dog ???!

Both sulk, study clouds, mud.

VIC

Sorry, Blood. ... I believe you 'bout how good thing's are "over the hill." Hell, I believe anything you say, you know that. And even if we don't know for sure, it's worth checkin' on. ... Right?

BLOOD stares the distance.

VIC FO

Right?

BLOOD FO

Right.

35. ANGLE

BLOOD stirs a bit. VIC takes this as a sign to move on, begins to get his stuff together.

VIC

And we will go...already promised you that. But right now I'm hungry and I wanta get laid. Find me some lovin' ...
(more)

35. CONTINUED

VIC

... and we'll go to the promised land. Ok?

BLOOD FO

That's what you always say.

VIC

I mean it this time. We'll go. Just find me a broad.

BLOOD FO

I'm hungry.

VIC

So'm I. Find me a chick and I'll hustle some food.

BLOOD FO

I'm hungry.

VIC

Ya already said that, and I said

BLOOD FO

I can't do good work when I'm hungry.

36. ANGLE

That blows VIC'S cork. He gets nose to nose with his dog.

VIC

You ain't gonna pull that "can't work when I'm hungry" crap on me again ! Get your own bread !!

BLOOD FO

You know full well that as we "lowly canines" became telepathic and sharpened our ability to find suitable companions for our human "masters" we lost the ability to hunt food for ourselves.

VIC

"Suitable companions" huh?! You mean those hard, solitary, tough, stringy scumbags you dig up for me from time to time that are ...
(more)

36. CONTINUED

VIC

... just as likely to cut off my ...

BLOOD FO

No food, no females.

A standoff.

37. ANGLE

VIC'S so mad he's about to choke. He flounders around like a chicken with its head off. But ... he's against the wall. DOLLY as he snatches up his rifle and moves off. He doesn't even glance back at BLOOD outlined against the sky.

VIC

Ok ! OKAY !!!

He stalks off.

VIC

I'm gonna let you get by with it this time ! You just sit here on your fuzzy butt while I do all the work.

He turns. HOLD his back, BLOOD in b.g. VIC'S finger stabs the air to drive home his point.

VIC

But I'll tell you one sure thing, ol' buddy-buddy, you better do some practin'. It's been 6 weeks since I been laid and it sure as hell ain't been that long since you ate !

As he spins and stomps by camera,

VIC

But it may be if you don't start producing !!!

CUT TO:

38. EXT ROOFTOP DAY

A gaping hole has been chopped for access, discarded items litter the mud-crusting shingles and the area. HEAR somebody

CONT.

38. CONTINUED

rummaging in the house, stumbling, throwing. VIC emerges, checks a silver candlestick in the better light, decides it's of no immediate value, tosses it away, disappears back down hole. More foraging. VIC climbs out, moves away. No luck.

CUT TO:

39. INT STORE DAY

Shambles. Barely recognizeable as what it once was. Contents of the place have either been destroyed by the blast, the resulting fire, or have been picked over so many times nothing is left. VIC heaves boxes, debris, checking everything. Digs in ashes of ... a noise? Rifle springs to his hands, ready ... nothing. Back to search for food.

CUT TO:

40. ECU VIC

Eyes fixed, locked. Perspiration bathes his face. Concentration is absolute.

41. POV

Two huge WATER RATS, green/ochre, feeding among reeds and grass beside slowly moving stream.

42. EXT STREAM DAY

FULL. VIC slides rifle up very quietly. Sights, can't get a clear shot. He cases forward.

43. ANGLE

He's having one hell of a time ... and something's wrong.

44. POV

The RATS' noses test the air ... they bolt.

45. BACK TO SHOT

Damn, he's lost them. Might be others. Very quietly, snakes his way forward ... his eyes nail something.

46. POV

Toy POODLE. Dainty, white, big red bow. It's nervous.

47. BACK TO SHOT

This is one for the books, but it's meat. Damn these reeds. He slides quietly around protrusion in the stream bank ...

48. ANGLE

... and damn swallows his teeth. Surprise ! He stares at ...

49. POV

... YOUNG BOY, 7, naked as a jay bird, knee deep in water, bathing, who sports the same startled look.

50. ANGLE

Both are locked in place. Neither wants to make the first move. Neither notices shadows of 2 ROVERS until,

#1 o.s.

Look at the ass on that one.

VIC swings his rifle up. YOUNG BOY makes a dash through the water for his weapon. The 2 ROVERS leap on the BOY.

51. ANGLE

Water boils as ROVERS struggle to get the BOY subdued. He screams, kicks, fights, bites, scratches. ROVERS, 14-15, much bigger, are finally forced to hold the BOY under water to control him.

52. ANGLE

VIC realizes they haven't seen him, starts back the way he came. The BOY'S screams get to him, however, and he swings back to even up the odds ... and freezes as 4 more ROVERS crowd to the lip of the bank. VIC buries deeper in the reeds.

53. ANGLE

The fight has been drowned out of the BOY. One of the ROVERS on the bank wants a closer look.

#2 o.s.

Let's see what we got.

Hold the BOY up for approval like a prize pig.

CONT.

53. CONTINUED

#2 o.s.

Hey, he's a pretty little thing.

Everybody agrees he's worth keeping. The BOY is handed up to the larger group who paw and fondle him like an unwilling girl. ROVER in the water starts toward VIC.

54. ANGLE

VIC readies to fight ... realizes the ROVER is only reaching for the BOY'S food sack, gun.

55. ANGLE

VIC listens as ROVERS move away, happy with their catch. Sure they're gone, he runs off in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

56. EXT DRIED MUD DAY

The ground...a strange twisting, turning gouge mark in the crusty surface. Animal? PAN UP to hold BLOOD and VIC, idly dragging pointed stick, as they drift by a crazily tilted McDonald's hamburger arch that's stuck in the ground. Heat waves dance.

57. ANGLE

HOLD as they move toward us. Conversation is forced, slow.

VIC

... and there was this silly lookin' little-bitty white dog with a great big, uh, red, uh ...

His hands roughly shape the dog's bow around his own neck.

BLOOD FO

Bow. ... One of those manicured pets from downunder, I imagine, lost off its leash.

They move toward us ... BLOOD'S stomach growls.

VIC

Thought "bow" was what you shot arrows with.

CONT.

57. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO
Both. "Bow. B, o, w."

Time.

VIC
Taught me "b,o,w" was to, uh,
bend at the waist.

BLOOD FO
That's right too. Depends. It's a
verb and a noun. "Bow ... bow."

VIC'S stomach growls.

VIC
Yeah. Well, it was a useless
lookin' thing.

BLOOD FO
The bow?

VIC
The dog.

Time.

BLOOD FO
In a civilized society, Albert, a canine
is not necessarily supposed to work. His
companionship is sought by all. He's pet-
ted, fed royally, cared for, fawned over ...

VIC begins to chuckle.

VIC
I can see you now...hair all curled,
eyelashes painted, and a great big
fluffy red ...

BAROOM !! A far-distant explosion pounds their ears, shakes
the earth, snaps them to listening attention. BAROOM !
BAROOM ! Smiles spike their faces.

VIC
Fresh meat?

CONT.

57. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

Maybe !

PAN as they streak toward the distant, debris-laden cloud that slowly mushrooms into the sky.

CUT TO:

58. EXT DRIED MUD DAY

This area is a good distance from the last hole. 4 heavily armed GANG MEMBERS form a circle, faced outward, on guard. Stakes in the ground marking their calculations, 2 GANG MEMBERS bore small holes, carefully place dynamite sticks, affix fuses. Well back from this activity, a sedan chair (easy, stuffed type strapped to 2 poles, draped with wall-to-wall carpeting) supports the prodigious bulk of the GANG BOSS. This huge, unbelievably fat royal person is shaded from the sun by an attendant with a cloth shade on a long stick, fanned by another. Clustered around the throne: 2 painted, pretty YOUNG BOYS, GUARDS, food sack, other comforting goodies ... and a BOY, guitar in his hands, rope fastened around his neck. Warning signal is given, fuses lit. The resulting blast flings great gobs of dried mud, dust, gouges the already-started hole deeper. More dynamite is placed. Far in the b.g., SOLO hovers, hopes ... and waits.

59. ANGLE

VIC and BLOOD, bellied down behind junk from closest hole.

BLOOD FO

Lot of 'em.

VIC FO

Yeah.

BAROOM ! BAROOM ! BAROOM !!!

60. ANGLE

This time more dried mud, more dust ... and parts of a house fill the air. All except GANG BOSS and the royal entourage swarm into the still-smoking hole. HEAR digging, ripping, cursing, orders, shouting. GANG BOSS waves his arms and he and the throne are borne to the lip of the hole. Now all except GANG BOSS, PRETTY BOYS, ATTENDANTS, ONE GUARD, and BOY ON ROPE jump in to help. GANG BOSS snaps his fingers

CONT.

60. CONTINUED

and a can of something is slashed open and pressed in his hands. He swills it down, spilling half down his front. He jerks on the rope and the BOY ON ROPE begins to strum his guitar softly and calm the area with a touching ballad ... childlike, flawless. PRETTY BOYS entice a bit of the contents of the can from the GANG BOSS. The watching SOLO ... waits.

61. ANGLE

BLOOD is scanning. VIC watches.

BLOOD FO

They're finding usual stuff ... kinda high quality. No food ... yet.

They settle to wait. It's dry, warm ... and the song touches a melancholy note. They drift, dream a little.

VIC FO

Think it really exists?

BLOOD FO

Yes.

VIC FO

How come we ain't found it? We've looked.

BLOOD FO

We'll find it.

VIC FO

Maybe it's a mistake. Maybe they were talking about a downunder. Maybe we're chasin' a dream.

BLOOD FO

There's always an "over the hill," Vic. That's what's kept the world going. We've just gotta keep moving, not stop too long along the way. Be sure that ...

BLOOD'S "reading" something.

BLOOD FO

... found a room, think there's food ... little trouble getting in ... working on it.

CONT.

61. CONTINUED

Waiting. Song lilts the air.

BLOOD FO

It'll be dry, warm, enough to eat, people
that get along, no need to grab. ...
course, we'll have to work, work hard ...

Song.

BLOOD FO

... but for the first time, we'll be alive,
instead of dead thinking we're alive.

Song ends. So does the dream. And the waiting.

BLOOD FO

Something's happening.

62. ANGLE

PAN as they inch for a better look. OVER THEIR SHOULDER, the hole, GANG BOSS, ATTENDANTS, PRETTY BOYS, BOY WITH GUITAR. An excited to-do breaks out in the hole. GANG BOSS leans forward to see better. GANG MEMBER pops up out of the hole at the GANG BOSS' feet, dumps an armload of something, rattles on excitedly, disappears back in the hole. GANG BOSS, moving his bulk as fast as tonnage will permit, follows. GUARD with him. Not much between VIC and the goodies in the food sack.

VIC FO

Might work.

BLOOD FO

Better wait'll they split.

VIC FO

To hell with waitin' !

63. ANGLE

DOLLY VIC as he runs like a son of a gun toward the vacated throne, poorly guarded food sack. PRETTY BOYS and BOY WITH GUITAR turn startled expressions. Damn, can't he ever get there. He does. Snatches up the food sack. PRETTY BOYS sort of flutter around and make limp-wristed pokes to slow him down. VIC kicks one of them into the hole. BOY WITH GUITAR shoves the other after his friend. VIC, loaded down with the sack,

CONT.

63. CONTINUED

beats it back toward BLOOD as fast as he can. BOY WITH GUITAR comes flying after him, trips on the rope tied about his neck, springs up and runs some more.

64. ANGLE

BLOOD in f.g. VIC coming as fast as he can, BOY behind. GANG MEMBER'S head pops up over the rim of the hole, he digs the ground at VIC'S feet with a quick shot. GANG MEMBERS swarm out of the hole, dash after VIC screaming, shooting, chasing. VIC makes the hiding place, sprawls in his haste, unslings his rifle, returns the fire, nails the foremost GANG MEMBER. BOY practically runs over VIC in sprawling to safety. OTHER GANG MEMBERS find what cover they can. VIC'S got them nailed down ... for the moment. He takes the time to slash the rope from around the BOY'S neck, shove a couple of cans from the food sack into his hands, chase him on his way. GANG MEMBERS use pause to close in. VIC'S fire sends them digging for cover. Couple of the GANG MEMBERS sprint out of the hole in opposite directions ... they're going to pinch VIC and BLOOD in. VIC slings the food sack over his shoulder, lays down a barrage that makes them all dig in deep ... and he and BLOOD take off. GANG MEMBERS realize the firing has stopped, pause a wary moment, come barrelling in, sweep past.

65. ANGLE

CLOSER on hole. The GANG BOSS' huge head slowly, cautiously rises until his eyes are barely able to see over the rim. The watching SOLO moves in, snaps a shot at the head of the GANG BOSS who manages to duck out of the way. A couple of GANG MEMBERS pour out of the hole to gun this poacher down. In the far b.g. another SOLO moves carefully toward the hole.

66. ANGLE

3 PAIRS OF LEGS (overalls, overalls/spats, blue serge) in f.g., residual action with BOSS, GANG MEMBERS, SOLO in b.g.

#2

You were right. That's our boy.

#1

Michael :

BLUE SERGE LEGS move after VIC and BLOOD, are stopped with,

CONT.

66. CONTINUED

#2

No. Let's put out the cheese.

Moment of indecision.

#1

Thought we had a problem.

#2

We did. I've taken care of it.

#1

You're the boss.

#2

Let's hope the boy sees it that way.

They chuckle at the absurdity of this observation. EXIT.

CUT TO:

67. EXT DRIED MUD LATE AFTERNOON

VIC and BLOOD are sprawled in and around the rusted, twisted remains of an auto. Everything has been stripped from it so that only the skeleton of its former glory remains. VIC has opened the top button of the rags of his pants to allow his distended stomach a bit of room. Many empty cans attest to their feast. The bulging food sack stolen at the hole lies close by. A soft, satisfying belch oozes out of VIC as he begins to transfer goodies from stolen sack into his own.

VIC

So whaddaya want to do tonight?

Belch. BLOOD tries to look unconcerned. Licks chops, yawns.

BLOOD FO

Doesn't matter to me. Whatever you'd like to do, Alb ... Vic.

VIC pats their now-bulging sack.

VIC

Now that we're loaded, we could hit the turf.

CONT.

67. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO
(offhand, nearly)

We could do that.

VIC

If you'd rather not ...

BLOOD FO
(too quickly)

No, no ... that'd be fine, Vic.

VIC finishes transferring.

BLOOD FO

We might even get some popcorn.

The boy takes off.

VIC

(needle to heart)

Would you like that?

BLOOD starts smart answer, chokes it back. VIC'S light laughter can still be heard even though the falling darkness swallows them up.

CUT TO:

68. EXT DRIED MUD NIGHT

Damn it's dark. Far in the distance, staccato burst of gunfire. VIC and BLOOD slip over/around debris. PAN their progress. In b.g., the silhouette of MAN on guard at fire.

#1

... so then I offered him 50 rounds of ...

#2

Willya shut up, for Christ's sake ! I'm tryin' to sleep.

#1

Blow it !!

VIC and BLOOD press closer to the ground.

#1

... 50 rounds of high-powered, steel- ...

CONT.

68. CONTINUED

They slither to corner of a demolished building, slide out of view. HOLD ... both burst back around the corner, slipping and sliding, find a hole in a pile of junk, dive into it.

69. ANGLE

They scramble, crash, claw their way in. HOLD their hiding place, their eyes. Absolute enforced stillness ... quiet. Faintly, then louder, HEAR a scraping, that of a person dragging a useless leg. A sick-green glow glides toward them ... and on past. They lean slightly forward to better follow the progress of the unseen menace.

BLOOD FO

Screamer?

VIC FO

Think so. Wasn't hanging around to ...

From direction of the campfire a terrified scream, gunfire.

#1

Screamer ! Put out that god-damned
fire ! Screamer !!!

All hell busts loose.

CUT TO:

70. INT THEATRE LOBBY NIGHT

Same as outside - disaster. Holes, blown by the bomb or rotted away, patched. Dust. Dirt. Piles of junk. Seven or 8 cots, beds. One GUARD is asleep, another sews at some rag he calls clothes. Couple more lounge. Part of the generator can be seen through a blasted wall. A popcorn machine, a varied assortment of quart cans and bottles close, to hold the bought popcorn. VIC and BLOOD are waved through the door by GUARDS. Most loungers turn to size up the newcomers, huge guard DOG showing special interest. VIC and BLOOD shuffle on, returning stare for stare, stop in front of a GUARD watching over weapons of all sorts pegged on wall behind him. VIC hands over his, reluctantly, watches them pegged with the others. GUARD turns to stare at them, VIC and BLOOD turn slowly around, full circle, face GUARD again. He nods they can enter. VIC notices water leaking on his rifle.

CONT.

70. CONTINUED

VIC

They'll get wet. Move 'em over.

GUARD ignores him. VIC grabs his shirt.

VIC

You muthergrabbin' toad ! You move my stuff over to the other side ! It goes to rust fast. It picks up any spots, man, I'll break your bones !

GUARD starts to bust VIC. The CHECKER, concentrating on some mechanical device to this point, looks up, chimes in.

CHECKER

Alfalfa, move his heat. We don't need no trouble tonight.

GUARD eases back as VIC turns him loose, moves the gun. VIC glares, moves to buy his way into the show. He digs in his sack, comes up with a can with "Sardines" written on it and a picture of them on label, shoves it at the CHECKER.

CHECKER

(calls over shoulder)

Sardines.

BOOTH VOICE

We can use 'em.

CHECKER deposits can with others.

CHECKER

For the mutt?

VIC

He ain't no mutt.

CHECKER

You wanta see the movies or doncha?

VIC digs again, comes up with can labeled "Beets" in letters an inch high, but no picture. CHECKER stares blankly at label.

VIC

Peaches.

CONT.

70. CONTINUED

CHECKER

How the hell do I know that?

VIC

You can read, can't ya?

CHECKER glares, studies label ... calls to booth.

CHECKER

Peaches. For a dog.

BOOTH VOICE

Take 'em.

BLOOD chokes back laughter, shares a moment with VIC.

71. ANGLE

They walk by the popcorn machine, VIC pays no attention.

BLOOD FO

Hey. I want popcorn.

VIC

Pass.

BLOOD FO

You said we'd get some.

VIC

You said.

BLOOD FO

Come on, Albert, buy me some popcorn.

VIC

I'm tapped. You can live without.

BLOOD FO

You're just being a creep.

VIC FO

Remember that when you want to call
me Albert.

He leaves the dog sitting, staring wistfully at the wilted popcorn. Then, tail high, jauntily, BLOOD gathers himself

CONT.

71. CONTINUED

and follows VIC into the blackness.

BLOOD FO

I hope the next time you play with
yourself you go blind.

72. INT THEATRE NIGHT

BLOOD pads in, catches up with VIC. There's a bottleneck as they meet 3 ROVERS coming out. In squeezing past, something is knocked over and crashes to the floor. Screams of "FChrist's sake" and "Cool it" erupt from faces turned to measure them on their entrance, and then swing back to the picture. It's a "skin flick" of the worst order. The weak projection lamp spews trite garbage on screen that is barely hanging together with patches of bedsheets, small strips of wood, and about 80 pounds of nails. The decor matches the lobby - Early American Disaster. We see that deadly-dull portion where boy meets girl for the first time in the seedy hotel room and are drinking cheap booze from dirty glasses and trying to convince each other that they are having a good time before they get down to "it." We see enough "skin" to leave little doubt, but with the emphasis on the funny side. VIC spots a couple of seats in the center, starts to them.

BLOOD FO

Too exposed.

VIC searches until he spots seats in a corner. They scrape past a SOLO and his dog, sit.

73. ANGLE

Can't see the screen from this angle, but we can hear it getting a little warmer. BLOOD'S attention wanders to the SOLO sitting next to him noisily sucking up popcorn. BLOOD stares so long, hard, that SOLO shifts the popcorn to his other hand. Still BLOOD'S gaze is fastened. Now the SOLO'S DOG leans forward to warn BLOOD off. Doesn't work. The SOLO shifts, tries to watch the screen. Shifts again. Moves to another seat. BLOOD sighs his disappointment, sinks down in seat, concentrates on picture.

74. ANGLE

The picture is getting down to business.

NOTE: Never will we see anything to take us out of GP rating. Suggestions, yes; specifics, no. Humor and taste.

75. ANGLE

VIC and BLOOD.

76. ANGLE

Picture.

77. ANGLE

The picture's got VIC. He's beginning to get a little hot under the collar - and elsewhere. BLOOD ... something is nagging, pulling at him. He nails it better, leans to VIC.

BLOOD FO

There's a chick in here.

VIC'S rapt attention with the picture evaporates.

VIC FO

You're nuts.

BLOOD FO

Uh-huh man. She's in here !

They scan for their target.

78. POV

Nothing out of the ordinary.

79. ANOTHER POV

Usual.

80. ANGLE

They're still searching.

VIC FO

Where ?!

BLOOD FO

Gimme a minute.

He goes into his routine for sniffing out girls.

81. POV

Is a "she" really out there?

82. ANGLE

BLOOD is still doing his routine. VIC searches, a little frantically now, till a light begins to dawn ... he's been put on.

VIC FO

You lyin' egg-sucker ... I oughta boot your tail up around your ears !

BLOOD'S honor is being questioned, and he doesn't like it.

BLOOD FO

I'm telling you, there's a ...

VIC FO

Then tell me how's come you can whiff her and no other dog's caught her?

BLOOD FO

You forget who I am, Albert.

VIC FO

Didn't forget. I just don't believe it.

BLOOD'S eyes flash, he draws himself up in dignity.

BLOOD FO

Most students have a modicum of respect for their teachers.

With that pearl thrown before the swine, he proceeds to wrap himself in a full pout. VIC returns to watching the show ... then begins to realize he may have acted hastily. Hell, he'd like to get laid.

VIC FO

Where is she?

No answer. VIC decides discretion is the better part of valor, he'll eat a little crow.

VIC FO

Sorry. Didn't mean it.

BLOOD is not moved. He's waiting for something more.

VIC FO

Okay. I was dumb, you taught me all I know. I believe everything you say.

83. ANGLE

Two ROVERS are having at it in f.g. They curse, yell, gouge, roll, flail at each other. In b.g., SEE a couple of GUARDS plus DOG rush in, locate the disturbance. In the flickering light of the projection beam the studiously unconcerned faces of other ROVERS are fixed on the screen as if the fight was not happening.

84. ANGLE

VIC and BLOOD in f.g. keep their eyes glued to the screen as GUARDS and DOG break up the fight by stomping and beating the fighters into jelly and dragging their unconscious forms out.

VIC FO

Everything.

He waits for his friend to give him the desired information - is struck by an awesome thought.

VIC FO

Hey, that wasn't her, was it?

BLOOD is a smiling sphinx. VIC figures she's still here.

VIC FO

Comeonnn! She might get away! ...
I'll buy you the popcorn.

BLOOD savors this concession. It's something, but not enough. VIC waivers. He can't really believe a girl would be stupid enough to be here. Yet ... what if BLOOD is right?

VIC FO

Bottom line ... you are a brain with an educated nose, and no other canine is in your class.

BLOOD FO

Third row, aisle seat, dressed like a solo.

85. POV

Somebody's there, its shoulders barely showing. Small.

86. ANGLE

VIC studies the o.s. form with squinted eyes, deep concentration. Hell, he's not convinced one way or another.

CONT.

86. CONTINUED

VIC FO

You sure?

BLOOD FO

As sure as I can be. It's a girl.

VIC studies the o.s. person again. And again. And ... he's finally a believer. Hot dawg, he's gonna get some! He settles back to wait, but spikes his attention on the suspect.

DISSOLVE TO:

87. INT THEATRE NIGHT

Almost all of the crowd has gone, but not the SUSPECT, VIC, BLOOD, and a SOLO. Picture is a different one, a melodrama whose dullness and cheapness is surpassed only by its terrible sound and scratches.

88. ANGLE

VIC is wide awake with the thoughts of a little fun with the GIRL. BLOOD'S asleep on seat.

89. ANGLE

The SOLO stalks out. GIRL doesn't move. VIC and BLOOD wait it out. Finally ... she eases up the aisle and out.

90. ANGLE

VIC doesn't give her the slightest tumble as she moves past. A long beat ... he shakes BLOOD, they ease out.

91. EXT THEATRE NIGHT

BLOOD exits, waits. Emptiness and destruction. Soft breeze.

CHECKER o.s.

Shut it down.

VIC comes out jamming shells into his empty rifle.

VIC FO

Okay, nose, where'd he go?

BLOOD FO

Her. To the right.

CONT.

91. CONTINUED

DOLLY as BLOOD leads. Weapons loaded, VIC hurries to catch up.

VIC

Hey.

BLOOD pauses to wait, starts again when VIC is close, realizes his friend is not moving with him, stops, turns. A long moment as they study each other. VIC wants to say something, can't seem to find the words. He gets a sheepish look, reaches into his shirt, fumbles, and comes out with ... a handful of popcorn. 'Nough said. A smile washes across the dog's face, he inhales the peace offering. They slip out into the total darkness.

CUT TO:

92. EXT CITY NIGHT

One entire block has been stomped flat, like a steel press had come down from Heaven and given one solid wham! and everything was powder under it. PAN VIC and BLOOD through the rubble until shooting OVER them onto one building that stands alone at the end of the smashed-flat block. HOLD. A bobbing light beam bounces from inside the darkened building. They duck across to slide in next to the building.

93. ANGLE

A partially dangling sign pegs the building the quarry has entered - YMCA. Doesn't have much pride left, but it's still standing. VIC leans away from the wall to read the sign as puzzlement spreads his face.

BLOOD FO

Young Men's Christian ...

VIC FO

Who cares? Good a place as any.

Anticipated joy leaks out of his eyes, manner. He follows a path that will take him to the rear of the building.

BLOOD FO

Don't need my help?

The boy pauses to toss a hard look at his dog, move on. BLOOD chuckles to himself, scratches out a comfortable spot, settles down to a bit of waiting.

94. INT YMCA NIGHT

VIC pulls himself up on a ledge, drops inside. Dark - glass blown in from windows sparkles on the floor - dust - cobwebs - decay. The only noise is his quarry moving around on the other side of the building. He shifts his rifle to his off hand, lifts the .45 for quicker, closer action, slides off toward the sound. PAN him by a row of metal lockers, blistered paint, that stand like so many dead soldiers, echoing the soft whisper of his progress.

95. INT SWIMMING AREA NIGHT

The big pool is empty, tiles buckled. VIC silently moves through. In the darkness, almost steps on a couple of corpses that are lying on the littered floor. They may have been dead a day, a week, or ... Real or imagined stench causes VIC to pull his bandana around his nose and keep moving.

96. INT PASSAGE NIGHT

Moonlight pours through busted windows and a chunk is out of the ceiling. Noise indicates his quarry is close, just on the other side of door at the end of the passage. He hangs close to the wall, moves to the door. It is open a crack, but is blocked by a fall of plaster. When he opens the door, it'll make a noise. He flattens against the wall, puts his eye to the crack by the door.

97. POV

Gymnasium, big one. Climbing ropes disappear into the darkness of the ceiling - horizontal bar, the high-tempered steel all rusty now - swinging rings, trampoline, wallbars, balancing benches, ladders. SHE is out of her disguise now, and it is a s-h-e! Standing in the skin, shivering, brushing her hair. Lack of light in the room shows it is a girl, but no detail. She moves in and out of the beam of a flashlight propped on a dusty vaulting horse which gives an occasional glimpse of just how beautiful she is. The glare of the light creates an aura about her, makes her seem even prettier, more delicate, dream-like.

98. ANGLE

VIC can't move. He is completely enraptured, awed. He has never simply looked at a pretty girl. Never had the opportunity, the time. The only ones he's ever seen are the scumbags that BLOOD had smelled out for him. Or the big chicks

CONT.

98. CONTINUED

in beaver flicks. Never like this one. This one is soft ... smooth. He could spend all evening just watching.

99. POV

She puts down the brush, picks up her panties, wriggles into them. Her bra. On backwards, around her waist, slides the cups around to the front, pulls it up under and scoops herself into it - first one, the other, the straps over her shoulder. Steps into her skirt, worrying it up over her hips, around her waist. Moves a big, fluffy apron aside, picks up her blouse.

100. ANGLE

VIC snaps out of his reverie. He leans his rifle against the wall, nudges some plaster out of the way, grabs the door.

101. POV

She raises the slip-on blouse, runs her hands into the arms, starts to pull it, tight fit that it is, over her head.

102. INT GYMNASIUM NIGHT

Door bursts open with crash of wood and plaster and VIC is on her before she can fight. He snatches the blouse the rest of the way off. She starts to scream, chokes it off, and her face goes wild - real wild. She stares in stunned disbelief. She's so pretty, so soft, so frightened he doesn't quite know what to do now ... has the damndest feeling he should say something ... something nice. Both stand, frozen, for the longest time. He realizes, finally, why he's here, trips her back, she goes down in a pile. He levels the .45 at her, her mouth opens in a little "o" shape.

VIC

Now, I'm gonna go over there and get
one of them wrestling mats, uh-huh?
You move off that floor and I shoot a
leg out from under you, and you'll still
get it, 'cept you'll be without a leg.

Waits for her to nod, let him know she is onto what he is saying. Automatic on her, he goes to big dusty stack of mats, pulls one off, drags it to her, flips the clean side up, uses the muzzle of the .45 to maneuver her onto it. She sits very still.

103. ANGLE

Holding the .45 in one hand, he unzips his pants with the other. Kind of clumsy, but works. Her face has lost a lot of its fright, gotten some of its blood back, is staring intently at him, funny like. He stops with the jeans.

VIC

What're you lookin' at?

Her stare hassles him - doesn't know why, but does.

SHE

What's your name?

Her voice is very soft ... like it comes up through a throat all lined with fur. She continues to look, waiting an answer.

VIC

Vic.

She waits for more.

SHE

Vic what?

He doesn't know what she means. Then,

VIC

Just Vic.

SHE

Well, what're your mother and father's names?

He laughs, starts working his jeans down again.

VIC

Boy are you a dumb broad.

She gets a little hurt look, makes him mad.

VIC

Stop lookin' like that, or I'll bust out your teeth !

He gets the pants down to his ankles, tries to balance on one foot while holding the .45 and getting the pants off over the sneaker. Not too successful. She sits, hands folded in lap.

CONT.

103. CONTINUED

VIC

Get that stuff off.

She doesn't move for a second, and it looks as if she is going to put up a fight. Then she wriggles out of the skirt. Being this close, she's down to very revealing undies, and her eyes are blue, and she is sooo soft, and ... he can't do anything. He finds himself standing there like some kind of a wetbrain, one pants leg off, his .45 pointed at this vision of loveliness ... that somehow doesn't seem so scared anymore.

VIC

What's your name?

SHE

Quilla June Holmes.

VIC

That's a weird name.

QJ

My mother says it's not that uncommon, back in Oklahoma.

VIC

That where your folks come from?

She nods, smiles.

QJ

Before the Third War.

VIC

They must be pretty old by now.

QJ

They are, but they're okay ... I guess.

Neither moves. She shivers slightly.

VIC

Well, I guess we'd better ...

He moves toward her, clumsy. For some idiot reason, he's embarrassed. She's as cool as ice, not ruffled a bit.

VIC

... better, uh, ...

104. ANGLE

BLOOD bursts in, sliding, completely ignoring QUILLA JUNE.

VIC

Now what?

Dawns on QUILLA JUNE that maybe VIC is not talking to her.

QJ

Who're you talking to?

VIC

Him.

QJ

The dog ?!

Disbelief in her tone stops BLOOD.

QJ

You expect him to answer you?

VIC

Yeah.

BLOOD FO

You going to talk to her all night ...

QJ

Then it's true ...

BLOOD FO

... or do you want to know why I came in?

QJ

... you can all talk to dumb animals.

VIC

(to BLOOD)

Okay, why?

BLOOD can't believe this "dumb animals" bit.

BLOOD FO

Dumb animals ?!

QJ

"Why?" How would I know ...

CONT.

104. CONTINUED

This is getting out of hand.

VIC
(whispered order)

Shut up ! Both of ya !!

They subside.

VIC FO

What is it?

BLOOD FO

We're in trouble, Albert.

VIC FO

Forget the mickeymouse. What's up?

BLOOD FO

Roverpak. Got the building surrounded.
I make it 15, 20 ... maybe more.

VIC

How the hell'd they know we was here?

BLOOD looks chagrined, drops his head.

VIC

Well ?!

BLOOD FO

Some other mutt must've smelled her in
the theatre.

VIC

Great !!

This bears a little planning. Not so with the dog.

BLOOD FO

Let's split !

Enough said, far as he's concerned. He turns to go.

VIC

We dig in, stand 'em off.

That spins BLOOD back around.

CONT.

104. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

What's this "stand 'em off" crap?
They'll eat us alive.

VIC

Guard her. I'll bug out back ...

BLOOD FO

Surrounded. Told you that.

VIC

... see if we can slip out.

BLOOD FO

Look, Vic, she's a doll, but hardly
worth our untimely end. I'll find
you another!

VIC

I'll check !! Got any helpful
suggestions?

BLOOD FO

Yeah !

The dog's got to fight to control his temper.

BLOOD FO

Pull up your pants !

VIC realizes he's been standing there, automatic in one hand,
leg of his pants in the other. He struggles back into his
trousers, EXITS. BLOOD glowers at this new element in his
life. She's what got them into this mess, what's keeping
them there. He swings away, plants himself at the door. She
has even more of a problem ... is it really possible to com-
municate with a dog?

105. INT PASSAGE NIGHT

VIC scoops up his rifle, sprints to the door, eases out.

106. INT GYMNASIUM NIGHT

BLOOD, still at door, realizes the flashlight is still on - a
dead giveaway to their position. He turns to QUILLA JUNE.

CONT.

106. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

Kill the light !

She has decided it might be possible to communicate with this furry thing ... sits and blinks back at him.

BLOOD FO

Put out that damned ... !!!

She stares sweetly, trying to win him over with her smile.

BLOOD FO

(grumbling)

Hell ... do it myself.

He moves to the light, knocks it to the floor. QUILLA JUNE thinks he was just clumsy, decides to cheer him up.

QJ

Come on, darlin' ... you poor little baby. Mommy knows that mean old light made you drop it.

BLOOD FO

What are you talkin' about ?! "Drop it," my butt ! If you'd listened to ...

QJ

Put your little paw in mommy's lap and she'll kiss it and make it well.

She reaches out to enfold him.

BLOOD FO

Get out of the way !

QJ

Come on now, let mommy ...

His lips curl, hackles go up. She draws back, he scurries to his post at the door.

107. INT SWIMMING AREA NIGHT

VIC sneaks through. Hears something, crouches in deep shadow. Ahead he can see the soft shadow of a man. To his left - very faint scrape of shoe on glass, whine of a dog. Picking his way very carefully, quietly, he retreats.

108. INT GYMNASIUM NIGHT

BLOOD at door. QUILLA JUNE studies how to communicate. Tries again, larding her new approach with clucking, soft whistles.

QJ

Pretty doggie. Sweet doggie ...

She inches toward BLOOD, who turns to stare balefully.

BLOOD FO

You simple broad. Doggie ?!

Course she can't hear him, can't read him, presses in. A slight noise swings BLOOD back to his station, stops her. TIGHTEN on BLOOD at the door. HOLD. VIC crawls in.

VIC FO

You were right.

BLOOD FO

We gotta shake this place.

VIC FO

Let's set up for 'em.

VIC hustles out of shot.

CUT TO:

109. INT GYMNASIUM NIGHT

HIGH, SHOOTING DOWN. Moonlight pours through the broken windows, open door, bathes the area in soft light, piling puddles of dark shadow. Ladders on the walls and dangling climbing ropes that fall away below are distorted, seem to snake their curved way up. See nobody. Nothing moves. Quiet.

110. SUBLIMINAL

Floor level, the quiet gym.

111. SUBLIMINAL

Floor level, more.

112. SUBLIMINAL

Vic. Seems to be hanging in the air.

113. ANGLE

VIC. Sprawled on ceiling girder, rifle in his still hands.
Rifle reloads, automatic, extra clips laid close, ready.

114. ANGLE

The gym. See no one. Still, quiet.

115. ANGLE

Front door. Open. Pools of shadow created by moonlight.
Still. Something moves. There ... a shadow in a shadow.
BLOOD ... ready, waiting.

116. ANGLE

More gym. HOLD. HEAR 2 distinct noises at same time - by
pool, boots crunching plaster - front door, tinkle of metal.

117. ANGLE

VIC hasn't moved a muscle.

BLOOD FO o.s.

A yoke.

VIC FO

Uh-huh.

He sights his rifle on the door to the pool, holds. Dog bark.

118. ANGLE

Part of shadow near the front door detaches itself and moves in,
opposite BLOOD. ROVER moves a step along wall, throws something.

119. ANGLE

VIC holds the rifle steady on the pool door.

120. ANGLE

The thrown object hits the floor, 2 ROVERS burst out of the
pool door, one to either side, rifles down ready to spray. Be-
fore they can fire, 1 ROVER is slammed against the wall.

121. ANGLE

See VIC at same time hear report of his rifle. Already he is

CONT.

121. CONTINUED

tracking across to the other side of the door, putting a second shot into the other ROVER, spins him to the floor.

122. ANGLE

ROVER at front door turns to run. BLOOD launches at him, over the rifle held up for protection, right at his throat. ROVER screams, BLOOD drops, carrying a piece of the guy with him, retreats to door.

123. ANGLE

VIC, shooting DOWN. ROVER with the torn throat goes down on one knee, making bubbling sounds. VIC slides rifle over, blows the ROVER out of his misery. Quiet drops back into place.

VIC FO

Not bad. Three takeouts and they still don't know our positions.

Quiet.

BLOOD FO

Maybe 3 out of 17, or 22 ... or 30. They can get poured full again. We ...

124. ANGLE

ROVER dashes through front door, leaps, hits on shoulders, rolls, changes direction, snaps 3 shots into different corners of the room.

125. ANGLE

VIC. ROVER is close enough under so he doesn't have to waste a rifle slug. VIC picks up .45, guns ROVER down.

VIC FO

Rifle.

BLOOD scurries out of shadows to fallen ROVER.

126. ANGLE

ON FLOOR with BLOOD as he picks up rifle in mouth. DOLLY him as he drags it over to pile of wrestling mats, drops it. As he turns away, QUILLA JUNE'S arm snakes out to snatch up the rifle, jerk it inside the pile. STAY WITH BLOOD as he moves

CONT.

126. CONTINUED

back to the ROVER, begins to worry ammo bandolier off the dead body. BLOOD'S exposed, stays at it.

VIC FO
You're a gutty little bastard.

Bandolier won't come off.

VIC FO
We get out of this, gonna hafta
get you somethin' good to eat.

BLOOD grabs ROVER'S arm in his mouth, lifts him off bandolier.

BLOOD FO
If we get out, no worry ... it's all
over the place.

He wrenches it free, starts back to QUILLA JUNE.

127. ANGLE

Two ROVERS crash through a ground floor window, one behind the other, hitting and rolling, going in opposite directions, as their dogs - a mother-ugly Akita, big as a house, and a Doberman - shoot through front door and split in the other 2 directions. VIC'S shot nails the Akita, the Doberman is all over BLOOD. One ROVER locates VIC by his shot, fires from the hip.

128. ANGLE

VIC. Soft-nosed slugs spang off girders around him. In ducking, he drops the automatic, it starts to slip off as he reaches for the rifle. He makes a grab for pistol, it slips away, falls. His grabbing for the falling gun saves him, as ROVER fires at where he had been.

129. ANGLE

Floor level. BLOOD and the Doberman, going at it. VIC'S fallen .45 slams to the floor. ROVER who has located him fires at sound. Other ROVER fires at sound, locates VIC, swings his gun to add firepower. Second ROVER is slammed to the floor.

130. ANGLE

Wrestling mats. QUILLA JUNE has stuck gun out, nailed the second ROVER, is firing at everything. Other ROVER turns his

CONT.

130. CONTINUED

gun on her position, begins to zero in. She jerks the gun back inside. ROVER turns his attention back to VIC, fires several times.

131. ANGLE

VIC'S regaining his balance, swings the rifle around. A shot from below, rifle is blasted out of his hands. He makes himself as small a target as possible.

132. ANGLE

ROVER slams another clip home. Close hits send him ducking.

133. ANGLE

QUILLA JUNE is firing up a storm.

134. ANGLE

VIC grabs a climbing rope, flips over girder, and howling like a banshee, slides down, kicks off, whips his body erratically.

135. ANGLE

ROVER is firing wildly, trying to hit this weaving target. VIC takes one more gigantic swing, lets go, and bowls end over end into the ROVER.

136. ANGLE

ROVER spangs off wall and VIC is on him, digging thumbs into eyesockets. ROVER is screaming. DOGS, rolling all over floor, are screaming. QUILLA JUNE bursts out from under the mats screaming. VIC pounds ROVER'S head against the floor until he stops moving, grabs up the empty rifle, gives him a final whap! He moves to the fighting dogs, creams the Doberman. Quiet is deafening. BLOOD is torn all to hell. VIC bleeds in several spots, gasps for breath. QUILLA JUNE'S shock is wearing off, and she makes soft crying sounds.

BLOOD FO

How're we going to get out of this,
Albert?

Heavy breathing, quiet sobs. O.S., a dog howls.

CONT.

136. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

How about a fire?

VIC

Get away while it's burning? They're staked out all around. No good.

Final, hopeless.

BLOOD FO

What if we don't leave? What if we burn up with it?

VIC stares long and hard at his fighting friend ... brave, smart as hell.

CUT TO:

137. INT GYMNASIUM NIGHT

Bodies of dead ROVERS and their dogs. VIC and QUILLA JUNE drag the last of the wrestling mats to a pile stacked against a wooden partition. BLOOD picks up a bandolier from a pile of weapons scavenged from ROVERS. VIC sets fire to QUILLA JUNE'S apron, shoves the burning cloth into the pile. QUILLA JUNE runs to pick up what remaining weapons she can, hurries after the departing BLOOD. Flames begin to catch as VIC grabs last of the weapons, strips shells, moves after his friends, scattering shells as he goes.

138. INT BOILER ROOM NIGHT

BLOOD leads the way through heavily littered room, followed by QUILLA JUNE. VIC dashes to them as they reach huge boiler, get in, pull door closed behind them.

139. INT BOILER NIGHT

It's as dark as the inside of your stomach. HEAR clumsy efforts as they fumble around, turn on flashlight. Its light is ghostly, dancing. All take their first deep breath in many hours, sit and stare uselessly at one another. QUILLA JUNE now has luxury of nerves, shakes.

VIC

Catch anything?

CONT.

139. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

A little. I'm reading one guy.
Building's burning good.

VIC

You be able to tell when they split?

BLOOD FO

Maybe ... if they split.

BLOOD stretches out. QUILLA JUNE sinks to the wrestling mat, VIC cases down beside her. He sees she is shaking, turns away to check their position one more time, looks back to see she's still at it.

VIC

Just take it easy. By morning the place'll be down around our ears and they'll go through the rubble, and find a lot of dead meat and maybe they won't look too hard for a chick's body. And everything'll be all right ...

She can't fight exhaustion any longer, her eyes creep shut.

VIC

(to himself)

... if we don't get choked off in here.

Her eyes pop wide with fright, but sleep won't be denied. She dozes. VIC can't fight the sleep that washes over him.

VIC FO

Can you handle it?

BLOOD FO

Suppose. You better sleep.

VIC stretches out, is asleep before his head hits the mat.

140. EXT YMCA NIGHT

Fire is catching, spreading. ROVERS and a DOG scamper out.

CUT TO:

141. INT BOILER NIGHT

BLOOD has shifted from his place on the metal floor to the mat,

CONT.

141. CONTINUED

is fast asleep. PAN to isolate VIC and QUILLA JUNE, asleep, cuddled close. His eyes flutter open, recognize surroundings, relax. They are heavy with perspiration. He squirms to get comfortable, reaches to feel the metal, jerks his hand back before it gets very close.

VIC

(to himself)

Like a furnace. Hell, it is a furnace.

Starts to move, realizes it would wake her, stops. Has the chance to really study her. Intrigue, mystery, doubts ... happiness cloud his face as he feeds on her with his eyes, imagination. And that's tough for him. He's lived a hard life, fought, stole, raped, took what he could, when he could. The sensations that flick up and down his spine are only partially triggered by her nearness, her physical body. There's also something about her softness, her vulnerability, that reaches back to that sense that 2,000 odd years have bred into him, but that only 20 have nearly eradicated.

VIC

(quiet, musing)

Funny...good just watch ya...see the way your waist falls in, hips out... to have you right in my hands...and want to just talk...keep you from being afraid ...

He bends to kiss her, realizes she might wake. Leans farther, moving to kiss her on the throat, hiding her face from camera. Kisses her throat again, lays his head gently on her breast, closes his eyes in warm dreams. Hold. His eyes pop open, get a guilty look, as,

QJ

Vic?

He starts to bolt, drop back into the old VIC, but her voice won't let him, holds him in the dream.

QJ

Have you ever been in love?

His eyes show that's the very word he's been trying to think of. But he's embarrassed to have felt it and made it so easy for her to see. He jerks away.

142. ANGLE

Heads only.

VIC

What?

QJ

In love? Have you ever been in love with a girl?

VIC

Well, I damn well guess I haven't !

That'll hold her.

QJ

Do you know what love is?

VIC

I guess I do !

QJ

But if you've never been in love ...?

VIC

Don't be dumb. I've never had a bullet in the head, and I know I wouldn't like it.

That stupid answer brings a small pout to her full lips.

QJ

You don't know what love is, I'll bet.

Damn her for getting inside - seeing the doubts that plague him. But when he doesn't know how to communicate, he knows how to take. A sudden movement, a quick rip, and he pulls the bra he has just snatched off so she can see it...cool smile around his lips.

VIC

How much ?

The threat is plain. Interrupted before, she's now fair game. But ... she doesn't scream, scratch, try to fight him off. Instead, her big soft eyes go even softer, a dimple digs itself in her velvet skin, the warm lips welcome, ready to share ... but for love, not demand. Never moving her eyes, her hand reaches for his. He can't hold the bra and her hand at the same time, and of course, the bra goes. Slowly, she guides

CONT.

142. CONTINUED

his hand o.s. Though we can't see, it is obvious she has placed his hand on her breast, holds it there. Physically, she is holding his hand to her body, but in reality, it's to her heart. They are completely still for a long, long time ... then, very softly, very gently, he begins to caress her. Her smile offers encouragement, sharing, greater ecstasies yet to come. She raises slightly to kiss him. His curiosity is replaced by love ... excitement ...

CUT TO:

143. EXT YMCA NIGHT

Flames leap and roar and stretch ... yellowredgreenorange.

144. ANGLE

ROVERS and their dogs, silhouettes against the brilliance of flames, run around like a Chinese fire drill. HEAR orders that make no sense, dogs barking, falling timber, curses. Shooting erupts from the burning inferno ... fire has reached the shells VIC planted. Everyone dives for cover and the hail of their return shooting vies with the roar of the flames.

CUT TO:

145. INT BOILER NIGHT

VIC and QUILLA JUNE are lying in each others arms, whispering as only lovers who have satisfied their passion can. Quiet.

NOTE: Never seen below the waist, both are nude. She will only be shot from the back, or with him interposed between camera. .

VIC

... and then the Third War and more bombs. That's when the big waves buried most of the cities and we've had to dig for what we need.

Now she can appreciate why things look like they do up here.

QJ

You're awfully smart ... to know all of that history.

He basks in her admiration ... has twinge of guilt.

CONT.

145. CONTINUED

VIC

Well, Blood helps ... a little. But
you were tellin' me ...

QJ

Oh, let's see ... and we have bunches
of parties, picnics ... all sorts of
keen things to do ...

She stirs, rubs against him. Pressure.

VIC

You like it?

QJ

Yes.

She gets a bit closer.

QJ

Haven't you ever been downunder?

He feels he's being crowded with something besides her body
... like maybe an idea?

VIC

No. And I don't guess I want to,
either.

She moves closer, if that's possible.

QJ

Why? It's very nice.

VIC

Yeah, I heard how "nice" from a
solo that raided one.

She must be patient, firm ... like with a slow student.

QJ

It's very nice. You'd like it.

Quiet.

VIC

Bullshi ...

CONT.

145. CONTINUED

QJ

That's very crude.

VIC

I'm very crude.

Their first lover's spat.

QJ

Not all the time.

VIC

Listen, ass ... I grabbed you, pushed you around, tried to rape you ... did rape ya. So what's so good about me, huh?

A warm smile, dimples.

QJ

I didn't mind. I liked doing it.
Want to do it again?

Something's wrong here. He thought only boys like it.

VIC

What the hell is wrong with you?
Don't you know that a chick ...

She touches him again, strokes his hair.

VIC

... from a downunder like you can
really be mauled by solos? Don't
you know chicks get warnings ...

She rubs his chest, tickles his back ...

VIC

... from their parents. "Don't cumup,
you'll get snagged by them ...

... and his eyes begin to blur, his breath begins to shorten.

VIC

... dirty, hairy, slobberin' solos!"

CONT.

145. CONTINUED

He begins to press in. PAN to isolate BLOOD, sharing the same pad with them. He is supposedly asleep on his stomach through this gushing. Eye nearest them is closed ... the other wide open, trying to bear with it all. HOLD. He begins to bounce ... ever so slightly at first, then more ... more.

DISSOLVE TO:

146. INT BOILER NIGHT

BLOOD, now on his back, feet in air, feigning sleep ... bouncing.

DISSOLVE TO:

147. INT BOILER NIGHT

BLOOD, on his side, still faking, still rocking.

DISSOLVE TO:

148. INT BOILER NIGHT

BLOOD, back on his stomach, bouncing. It begins to slow in rhythm and intensity, stops.

BLOOD FO

I'm not going to keep pretending I'm asleep. I'm hungry. And I'm hurt.

Whispering, an "aah" of disappointment ... VIC moves in, checks the dog closely. He has a big chunk out of his right ear, a rip down his muzzle, blood-matted fur on one side.

VIC FO

Jesus, man, you're a mess.

BLOOD FO

You're no stinking rose garden yourself, Albert.

BLOOD'S voice snaps. He doesn't want to be pawed over. VIC pulls his hand away, touches boiler wall.

VIC

Can we get out of here yet?

BLOOD begins to cast around, trying to read what is happening outside. QUILLA JUNE, now in bra and skirt, crawls over to see

CONT.

148. CONTINUED

what is going on.

BLOOD FO

Can't get any readings. I'll have
to go out and scout.

VIC

Think you can handle it, the condition
you're in?

BLOOD FO

I guess I'll have to, won't I. I mean,
what with you busy loving your brains
out, there ain't much left for staying
alive, is there?

He glowers. VIC moves to the door.

149. ANGLE

VIC undoes the door as BLOOD moves close. QUILLA JUNE senses
she is not needed, hangs back. VIC tries the door a couple of
times, it opens an inch or so. He braces his back, plants his
feet, gives a slow steady shove. Whatever is restricting the
door starts to give, tumbles away with a crash. An uneasy
glance - are there still ROVERS waiting, did this noise alert
them? Nothing happens, they decide to press on. VIC pushes
the door completely open, peers out. Everything is still
smoking. Daylight filters, yellow and sickly.

150. EXT BOILER DAY

BLOOD slips out. Upper floors have fallen in, but by the time
they'd given, they'd been mostly cinder and lightweight rubble.
The boiler is almost covered. BLOOD starts to pick his way.

VIC FO

Blood?!

The dog doesn't even pause, over his shoulder,

BLOOD FO

Figure they took a fast look, guessed we
were fried, split. I'll check.

VIC FO

Hey!?

BLOOD acts as though he has not heard, moves on.

151. INT BOILER DAY

VIC slams the door. QUILLA JUNE sits, her face full of all sorts of questions. He ignores her, snatches up one of the guns, begins to fiddle, over-concentrating on the simple action while he thinks. She worms her way close behind ... awfully close ... doesn't touch him, eats him up with her eyes ... wants attention. He knows. Oh yeah.

VIC

Come on ... can't you see I'm busy !

She doesn't move, fluster. Like a puppy, she radiates love, warmth. This kind of pressure he's not used to, can't stand.

VIC

I'm sorry ... Blood kinda brought me down.

In a little-girl voice that sounds a million miles away,

QJ

I don't think he likes me.

The rifle is no longer important. He turns, eyes touch. Hold. He fumbles for her hand.

VIC

Blood? Ah, he's just funny about chicks. He likes you a lot ... told me so.

A soft, cute smile.

QJ

Does he? Really? That's nice ... 'cause I think he's cute.

Thank God BLOOD hasn't heard that. She needs to be reassured, however. And of course the best way to do that ... take her in his arms. She plasters to him, warm, willing. They enjoy.

QJ

How do you do it?

After what they've been doing she needs directions?

QJ

Talk with him.

CONT.

151. CONTINUED

VIC

I dunno ... never thought 'bout
it. We just talk.

QJ

Why can't I hear what he's saying?

VIC

I dunno.

He isn't paying much attention to the conversation.

QJ

Ask him to teach me? Please! That'd
be super.

VIC

Dunno. He said somethin' one time ...
yeah ... he said it was, "'cause we
had a feelin' for each other ..."

QJ

Like love?

VIC

... I guess ... and "we thought
alike." I dunno.

He's in a real lather, now, and she's fast getting there.
But just as he is ready to rush right down to business, she
hits the brakes, whispering,

QJ

If you lived down there ...

He rushes past that roadblock ... she insists.

QJ

... you'd like it.

He disposes of that thought with cold logic.

VIC

I'd go nuts.

She forgets any arguments. Through their heavy breathing
and tussling, become aware of noise at door. Crap! VIC

CONT.

151. CONTINUED

crawls to the door, listens.

BLOOD FO o.s.

Vic !

Swings the door open.

BLOOD FO

All clear.

VIC would like his friend to go away.

VIC

You sure?

BLOOD FO

Yeah, I'm sure. Come on out here.
We have to talk some stuff.

Damn! He's not going to go away ... and VIC realizes BLOOD is not kidding. Dog moves away, VIC slides out.

152. EXT BOILER DAY

VIC trots after his friend, picking his way through the mess of black-sooted, still-smoking ruins, dressing as he goes.

153. ANGLE

The place is really down. Looks like the rotted stump of a tooth.

VIC

What's lumbering you?

BLOOD scampers up on a chunk of concrete, nose to nose with VIC.

BLOOD FO

You're going dumb on me, Vic.

VIC

How so?

BLOOD FO

Last night, man. We could have cut out of there, left her for them. That would have been smart.

CONT.

153. CONTINUED

VIC

I wanted her.

BLOOD FO

Yeah, I know. You've "wanted" her
about half a hundred times. Why're
we hanging around?

VIC doesn't really know.

VIC

I want some more.

BLOOD FO

Well listen, chum ... I want something
to eat, I want to get rid of this pain
in my side, and I want away from this
turf. Maybe they don't give up this easy.

VIC

We can handle all that. Don't mean she
can't go with us.

BLOOD FO

"Doesn't mean."

VIC offers nothing more.

BLOOD FO

And so that's the new story. Now we
travel three, is that right?

VIC is unsure here too.

BLOOD FO

Is that right !!?

VIC

You're starting to sound like a poodle.

BLOOD FO

And you're starting to sound like a
jackass !

VIC hauls back to crack him a good one, the dog doesn't flinch.
VIC drops his hand ... he's never hit BLOOD, won't start now.
Everything freezes.

CONT.

153. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

Sorry.

VIC FO

That's okay.

154. ANGLE

VIC turns, drifts a few feet.

BLOOD FO

Vic, man, you've got responsibility to me, you know.

VIC

You don't have to tell me that.

BLOOD FO

Well, I guess maybe I do. Maybe I have to remind you of some stuff. Like the time that screamer came up out of the street and made a grab for you. Righteous stone green, glowing like a fungus, all ooze and eyelashes.

VIC shudders at the mere memory.

BLOOD FO

And I went for him. Right?

VIC nods, guilty.

BLOOD FO

And I could have been burned bad, and died, and that would've been all of it for me, right or wrong. Isn't that true?

VIC

Okay, okay. Don't hanger me !

BLOOD FO

"Harangue !"

VIC

Well whatever !! Just knock off the crap, or we can forget the whole stinkin' arrangement!!

CONT.

154. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

Maybe we should, you simple dumb putz!

VIC

What's a putz, you little crud? Is that something bad?! Yeah! It must be! You watch your stinkin' mouth, son of a bitch, I'll kick your butt !!!

Both stare, waiting for the other to apologize. No.

155. ANGLE

PAN VIC as, head down, he moves slowly away. He goes a few steps, stops. Few more, turns reluctantly toward his friend.

156. ANGLE

BLOOD is as stiff as a pole, staring off.

157. ANGLE

VIC shuffles on his way, slowly, trying to think of some way to patch things without losing face.

158. INT BOILER DAY

THROUGH DOOR, VIC shuffles up, leans in. His eyes get big as saucers as something hits him good over the eye and he blacks out.

CUT TO:

159. EXT BOILER DAY

BLOOD FO

I told you she was no good.

VIC screws up his face in pain as he swabs out the cut with disinfectant and paints it with iodine. BLOOD hunkers amid the ashes, and you can almost hear him smirk.

VIC

Allright. Allright ... I'm sorry! But I don't like bein' made to feel guilty. Hell, it's always been 50-50 with you and me. I'm gonna do right by ya !

CONT.

159. CONTINUED

VIC climbs into the boiler, and from its interior pour sounds of guns being smashed and thrown.

BLOOD FO

Well, you'd damned well better. There are a couple of very hip solos making it around the city that'd be delighted to have a sharp tail-scent like me !

VIC o.s.

I don't like bein' threatened !

More crashing from inside. Then gets very quiet.

BLOOD FO

That's not a threat. That's a fact !

VIC o.s.

No, that's a good way to get your leg broke !

BLOOD FO

Don't lean ! Just 'cause some chick ...

VIC sticks his head out, shoves a little plastic plate at BLOOD.

VIC

What's this?

BLOOD FO

I don't know.

VIC

Well, smell it !

He does.

BLOOD FO

Identity card of some kind. Probably what she used to get out.

VIC disappears into the boiler. More rustling, he bursts out, heads off. BLOOD stares after him.

BLOOD FO

Where the hell are you going?

CONT.

159. CONTINUED

No answer.

BLOOD FO
Vic !!? You'll get killed out there !

VJC charges on.

BLOOD FO
I'm hungry, dammit !

No response. BLOOD tries to run after his friend. His first running strides hurt so much he has to sit down. He bellows after the fast diminishing figure.

BLOOD FO
Albert, you sonofabitch! Come back here !

VIC doesn't lose a step.

CUT TO:

160. EXT DROPSHAFT DAY

Tall, straight, featureless pillar of dull black metal, sky and soft clouds framing. HOLD, EASE DOWN, holding full height.

161. ANGLE

VIC hunkered down, studying the structure. Stands, walks circle around the thing.

162. POV

It is maybe twenty feet in diameter, perfectly flat on top, disappearing straight into the ground. A cap, that's all.

163. ANGLE

Circle of inspection completed, he walks close, touches it gingerly. Begins to circle again, looking and feeling for something.

164. POV

SHOOTING UP. The simple structure has power, majesty, aloofness. Small slot, also black, almost eludes his searching inspection. PULL AWAY, DOWN.

165. ANGLE

VIC, squatting, giving the slot his full attention ... must be the way to get downunder. Fumbles in his pocket for the card. Something jerks him, tips him over. WIDEN. BLOOD has him by the pants.

BLOOD FO

You moron, you can't go down there !

VIC kicks the dog off.

BLOOD FO

Listen to me !

VIC pins him with a look.

BLOOD FO

Albert ...

VIC

Vic, egg-sucker !

BLOOD FO

Okay, no fooling around.

His tone softens ... he's trying to get through to a friend.

BLOOD FO

Listen, man, this chick has bent you way out of shape. You know you can't go down there. It's all square and settled and they know everyone. They hate solos. Enough roverpaks have raided downunders and raped their broads, and stolen their food, they'll have defenses set up. They'll kill you, man !

VIC

What the hell do you care? You're always sayin' you'd be better off without me.

A lot of the fight leaks out of BLOOD.

BLOOD FO

Vic, we've been together a long time, good and bad, but this can be the worst. I'm hungry, I'm hurt, and I'm scared. Scared you won't come back, man. Let her go ! You said we'd go "over the hill." Let's go. Now! Don't go down there, buddy.

CONT.

165. CONTINUED

VIC can dig it. But ...

VIC

All I can see is her face. The little sounds when ... The way she slugged me. I gotta get even. Look, together we go down there, lay one on her ...

BLOOD FO

No way I tell ya.

VIC

I got to do it, Blood. I got to.

BLOOD breathes deep, sags a little more. Useless.

BLOOD FO

You don't even see what she's done to you, Vic.

VIC makes move to the shaft. BLOOD sits very still. VIC fishes out the identity card.

166. ANGLE

He hesitates, decides, inserts card in slot. There is a soft humming and a section of the pillar dilates. An access circle irises open. The soft humming picks up erratic beat. VIC removes card, stands. BLOOD moves a little closer, sits.

VIC

Well ...

BLOOD has unhappiness written all over.

VIC

I'll try to get back quick. Will you wait?

BLOOD is seldom without a smart word. This is one time.

BLOOD FO

For a while. Maybe I'll be here ... maybe not.

VIC FO

Take care of yourself.

CONT.

166. CONTINUED

BLOOD FO

Yeah. Hurry back.

VIC FO

Do my best.

BLOOD FO

Yeah. Right.

VIC starts for the pulsing opening ... spins, scoops up the startled dog, lunges for the opening. BLOOD screams surprise.

BLOOD FO

Put me down !!!

They go down in a heap of human arms, dog legs, screams, snarls, growls, yelps. Over and around they roll.

BLOOD FO

Let me go!

BLOOD has a mouth full of VIC'S sleeve, pulling, growling.

VIC

I'll need you down there !

The sleeve rips. Off balance, VIC reels backward ... right in to the access circle which promptly irises closed. Humming ceases. BLOOD stands outside, startled ... the torn sleeve still hanging from his jaws.

167. INT DROPSHAFT DAY

VIC scrambles to his feet, searches frantically for a way to reopen the portal.

VIC

Blood ?!!

BLOOD FO o.s.

You all right ?!

VIC

Yeah !

Humming gets louder, cool light grows in the walls. The floor dilates as the outside had done. He begins to sink slowly.

CONT.

167. CONTINUED

HEAR BLOOD scratching, trying to claw the portal open.

BLOOD FO o.s.
Shove your knife in a seam ! Short-
circuit the controls !

168. ANGLE

VIC is settling, slowly. Overhead, another portal closes, and BLOOD'S volume decreases, ceases. VIC stares down.

169. ANGLE

Tube looks a hundred miles deep. Softly lighted, at intervals, it stretches below him like a long necklace.

170. ANGLE

He starts to fall faster. Looks straight ahead, searching for something to slow his descent ... he slows. Experimenting, looks down, picks up speed ... looks straight ahead, slows. Accepting his lot, stares ahead, up, as he continues to sink.

171. ANGLE

OVER SHOULDER, softly glowing signs as he sinks past ... 10 LEV ... ANTIPOLL 55 ... BREEDERCON ... PUMP SE 6 ... faint markings of a section of other portals.

172. ANGLE

From above, as he settles down and away.

173. ANGLE

From below, as he sinks.

174. ANGLE

Bottom. He settles softly, bending a little at the knees. The portal swirls open. A large sign stands directly in front of the opening, cutting off any view. "TOPEKA, City Limits, pop. 2,860." Directly below this, "Today is Wednesday, June 29, 2024 - Thur., fair-warmer; Fri., fair-warmer (rain 2-4 a.m.); Sat., fair-cooler (rain 2-4 a.m.); WELCOME - TOPEKA International Lion's Club." He readies his rifle, eases out.

175. EXT TOPEKA NIGHT

The access portal irises shut behind him. He locates slot to reopen portal for later escape. He is on the side of a hill with bushes and small trees. Old fashioned street lamps puddle the area with soft green-white haze, indicate path to be followed to much larger light glow in the distance. VIC inches closer to the brink of the hill for a better look.

176. POV

Topeka stretches away, twenty miles to the dimly lit horizon of tin can metal where the wall behind him curves away and back, a complete circle. The soft light reveals miles of huge girders and beams, acres of plastic glass, guy wires, supports. He is at the bottom of a big metal tube that stretches up to a ceiling an eighth of a mile overhead, miles across. And in the bottom of that can, a town, as best he can see from here, that looks for all the world like a picture he would find in a water-logged book on the surface.

177. ANGLE

He strains to see better, can't. It doesn't sit well with him. He begins to feel canned, like a dead fish. He realizes he is wrong to come here, has to get out. He hustles to the shaft.

178. ANGLE

He fumbles the plastic card from his pocket, shoves it into the slot, portal hisses open. He starts in ... 2 large HANDS, straining out of a dark blue uniform coat, snake in to fasten on his shoulders, jerk him away from the portal.

179. ANGLE

Some stupidly smiling, blue uniformed giant - MICHAEL - clamps VIC in a vise-like grip. The boy struggles, squirms, wields his rifle like a club. The rifle bounces off the hulk and is brushed aside ... might as well have slapped a fireplug.

180. ANGLE

SHOOTING UP, VIC is turned upside down by MICHAEL and shaken like a gunny sack. Pistol, knife, ammunition, sling-shot, dirt, food, and plastic card cascade to the ground.

181. ANGLE

MICHAEL turns VIC upright again, tucks him under his arm, scoops up the fallen articles with his free hand, and stalks off with his burden ... still smiling.

CUT TO:

182.- MONTAGE
184.

CLOSE on soapy water as VIC'S face emerges from froth. WIDEN to MICHAEL, on his knees next to oldfashioned tub, scouring VIC like a newborn babe. MICHAEL has the look of "New York's Finest" written all over - dark blue uniform, gold buttons, wide belt, soft gray hat. His nightstick, hat, and coat are thrown over a period chair close by, as he is stripped to his BVD's from waist up. His florid Irish face wears bemused look of a man searching for any reason at all to break into a big grin. He turns the struggling VIC this way and that with ease as he applies the wash rag to VIC'S ear, oldfashioned scrub brush to the back, soap to the eyes.

185.- MONTAGE
187.

General store. Shelves bulging with every goody imaginable. Shoppers - aprons, long dresses, shopping baskets - tend to their business while cutting their eyes to watch VIC try to fight his way out of a pair of bib overalls and a shirt that any ROVER could spot a mile away. As quickly as he rips it off, MICHAEL forces it back on him.

188.- MONTAGE
190.

Eyes glowing like hot coals out of a face full of lather, VIC is stripped of face stubble, has his hair cropped short enough to please the toughest drillsergeant on earth. BARBER plies his trade with little interest and the hubbub draws no attention from the corner checker game.

191.- MONTAGE
193.

DOCTOR MOORE has VIC ... turn head, cough, stethoscope, knocks, depressors, blood tests, heart tests, eye tests, reaction tests ... every indignity a body can suffer at the hands of a very thorough physician. MICHAEL hovers.

194.- MONTAGE
196.

DOCTOR MOORE as "head Shrinker." He runs VIC through the whole

CONT.

194.- CONTINUED
196.

mess - blot tests, reaction tests, blocks-in-proper-slots test. DOCTOR MOORE and MICHAEL manage to get VIC on the couch. DOCTOR MOORE, note pad in hand, waits. MICHAEL, waits. VIC stares at the ceiling.

197.- MONTAGE
199.

Church. Soft light, empty space, quiet, cool ... like the reception the earnest PREACHER is getting from the out-of-place VIC. A small bible is offered/declined ... offered/declined ... offered/ ...

200.- MONTAGE
201.

This is more like it. Minus the everpresent MICHAEL, VIC lounges in comfortable rocker on porch of small house, up to his fanny in food. There are baskets of fruit. Baskets of chicken. Roasts. Hams. Steak. Biscuits. Cornbread. Gravy. Mashed potatoes. Sweet peas. Corn on the cob. Green salads. Congealed salads. Jello salads. Pies. Cakes. Ice cream. Milk. VIC stuffs down a huge wedge of chocolate cake, washes it with a swig of milk ... and rocks. Passersby pay scant attention, he returns the favor until the appearance of a DOLL with her PARENTS arrests him in mid-rock, rivets his attention, leans him from his seat ... and brings MICHAEL from around the side of the house to warn him back to his rocking.

202. EXT PARK NIGHT

So cute it hurts. Beautifully clipped grass. Flowers. Winding walks. Trees. Pagoda bandstand, a small brass band in full rhythm. Picnicers. Blankets spread on grass. Benches. Bicycles-built-for-two. Strollers. Men all tip their hats to the ladies, offer their seats to the ladies. Nod. Smile. Poodles on leashes, big bows. VIC, closely guarded by MICHAEL, and DOCTOR MOORE drift their way through. The DOCTOR gestures, poses, hammers away at VIC who is busy ogling more good looking CHICKS than he's ever even heard of. DOCTOR MOORE stops to exchange pleasantries with a group. A loose MONGREL DOG wanders up to VIC, who stoops to pet the animal, scratch its ears.

203. ANGLE

Holding VIC and MONGREL DOG in f.g., as DOCTOR MOORE hastily tears himself away from his chat with the people to drag VIC

CONT.

203. CONTINUED

up and on with their walk, motion to MICHAEL about the MONGREL DOG.

CUT TO:

204. INT AUDITORIUM NIGHT

LEW - spats, cane, old, small, sour - studies shine on his shoes. IRA - old, thin, nervous - contemplates something on the ceiling. Silhouettes, they sit in the middle of the many-seated, empty room. MEZ - sourfaced, prim - closer to the stage, stands and reads from scroll-like paper by light of small desk lamp. On the brilliantly lit stage, WOMAN, 45, holding jar of preserves.

MEZ

... be it resolved, therefore, that Mrs. Eunice Long has been declared the Blue Ribbon winner of the annual Topeka Canning Festival, and that throughout the year of our Lord, 2024, all preserved peaches, be they cans and/or jars, shall bear her likeness and the inscription "Topeka Queen."

IRA claps weakly twice. LEW shifts. The flustered, excited WOMAN is ushered off stage by MICHAEL who returns with middle-aged COUPLE as DOCTOR MOORE arrives, late.

MEZ

Fannie and Jerden Holmes.

The COUPLE'S appearance tugs at heart strings. A little frayed, a little tired, a little scared ... a lot of love. He tenderly puts his arm around her shoulders. They're ready, together, to face anything. They squint in the intense light, try to see out into the darkness ... wait.

205. ANGLE

IRA pulls out sheets of paper, hands them to LEW, DOCTOR MOORE.

IRA

This's the best the architects could do.

All study the papers, ignore COUPLE on stage.

CONT.

205. CONTINUED

DOCTOR MOORE

Why do they load us down with all these insignificant ...

LEW

Pencil?

IRA fumbles one out. Deep in creative thought, LEW roughs a drawing.

LEW

That'll do it.

DOCTOR MOORE and IRA study the new plan. LEW seems to notice COUPLE on stage for first time, indicates them with questioning nod.

IRA

Fannie and Jerden Holmes.

Still doesn't ring a bell with LEW.

DOCTOR MOORE

Quilla June's parents.

That nails it, but his attention is back on plans, changes.

LEW

Then, when that is in and working ... we'll add ...

As he works, he directs an almost offhanded condemnation of the COUPLE.

LEW

We find it almost impossible to believe that it was necessary to hold you as hostages ...

206. ANGLE

COUPLE. Resigned. They know they've had it.

LEW

... to force your daughter to participate in an undertaking that is vital to the continued growth and well being of our beloved Topeka. But it was.

207. ANGLE

LEW is finishing his additions to the sketch.

LEW

Defiance of this committee, duly
elected and ordained by the people,
cannot be tolerated.

Passes the sketches around. Their attention is focused on
the plans ... almost.

LEW

Final removal. Both of them.

MEZ notes this decision in her book.

LEW

Mez, how'd the last "finals" go?

Rattle of paper as she leafs back through the book to check.

MEZ

Ah, cancer and ... ah, no ... an
accident with farm machinery. Larry
and Linda McBurnett, March 17, this
year.

LEW

Let's make these ... ah, heart failures.
Wreath from The Committee, Doc'll handle
the eulogy, services at Lakeside Methodist
... usual.

He waves the COUPLE off stage in custody of MICHAEL.

LEW

May God have mercy on your souls.

To everybody, and nobody,

LEW

All right, let's go! let's go! Can't take
all day. Whew, what a headache.

To DOCTOR MOORE and IRA, with a touch of justifiable pride
about his revamped plans, as QUILL JUNE is ushered in by
MICHAEL.

CONT.

207. CONTINUED

LEW

Now that's the way to build a
cotton gin.

LEW'S mercurial personality takes another turn. He rushes up
to guide QUILLA JUNE off the stage, embrace her, personally
escort her up the aisle.

LEW

Quilla June, honey! It certain is
pleasin' to have you back home, safe
and sound.

208. ANGLE

DOLLY them up the aisle.

LEW

Everythin' go well? Didn't have no
trouble?

QJ

No sir.

LEW

Fine. You've done yourself proud,
Missy, and we won't forget it. No
siree !! Even though we did have
our little differences.

His look accuses, condemns ... forgives.

QJ

My folks ... are they all ...

LEW

They're fine, just fine ... doin'
a little job for the Committee.

209. ANGLE

Include DOCTOR MOORE, IRA, MEZ.

LEW

You run on home. They'll be along in
a day or so. Meantime, you'd better
stay with some neighbors ...

CONT.

209. CONTINUED

MEZ rattles her papers again.

MEZ

The Moores.

LEW

... the Moores, till your folks get back.

QJ

Yes sir.

LEW

Run along then. And let the Committee know if you need anything.

He shoos her out the front way, turns to contemplate an o.s. noise on the stage. DOCTOR MOORE eases over to whisper, indicate the stage.

DOCTOR MOORE

He and Vic were together, in the park.
I turned my back for a second and ...

LEW could kill DOCTOR MOORE, gladly. Both move toward stage.

210. ANGLE

The DOG that VIC had petted in the park is in firm grasp of MICHAEL. LEW and DOCTOR MOORE move up close.

LEW

What'd you and Vic talk about?
We want to know !!

Happy to have so much attention, the DOG cocks his head, listens intently. DOCTOR MOORE, ever the psychiatrist, snakes forward with the friendly approach.

DOCTOR MOORE

Wait a minute, Lew. I think he wants to help. He's just a bit confused.

He leans elbows on stage.

DOCTOR MOORE

How 'bout it, fella? We're gonna find out, and if you work with us ... it'll be a lot casier on everybody. What'dya say?

CONT.

210. CONTINUED

The DOG won't rat. DOCTOR MOORE moves to huddle with LEW.

DOCTOR MOORE
Feel kinda silly, questioning a dog.

LEW
Can't take any chances, not now.

As they stomp back to their seats,

LEW
Final removal ... immediately.

The DOG is drug off and VIC is led on by MICHAEL.

211. ANGLE

MEZ scribbles in her book. Uncomfortable in spotlight, VIC fights to get away, realizes it's hopeless, relaxes, squints into darkness of room. MICHAEL backs slightly away. Whispered conference ... LEW moves for closer look.

LEW
What'd exams show?

DOCTOR MOORE
I found no grave infection. Oh, usual cold virus, little over activity of the heart ...

VIC'S attention snaps o.s. to the pitiful, wailing of DOG as it is killed. The Committee pays absolutely no attention to the noise.

DOCTOR MOORE
... to be expected under these conditions. He's well developed, reasonably well nourished. Intelligence, average.

212. ANGLE

VIC, still trying to see out of the glare.

DOCTOR MOORE
Emotional responses erratic, abstract, somewhat tangential. Most marked finding is his overtly aggressive behavior.

213. ANGLE

DOCTOR MOORE

In other words, he's extremely physical. As you may have noticed.

DOCTOR MOORE chuckles at his own funny. Quiet. They're shadows in shadow. You can almost see the eyes ... probing, watching.

LEW

Well, now, son ...

VIC o.s.

Suck wind, wetbrain.

MEZ flicks light on, makes note. Others stare.

214. ANGLE

FULL. VIC glares. They continue to study this piece of meat.

LEW

You'd better be nice, boy.

VIC

I hope all your stinkin' kids are hair-lipped.

LEW

Michael.

MICHAEL lumbers toward VIC, who knows he's licked, waves hands.

VIC

Okay, okay.

LEW

You ready to behave yourself?

VIC

Yeah, I guess.

LEW figures he is.

LEW

Along with many other subjects that somehow manage to stay alive up above, you were observed, studied, unobtrusively of course. Living habits, tenacity, common sense, physical prowess.

(more)

214. CONTINUED

LEW

Out of the many, you were chosen,
baited down here ...

The light dawns on VIC.

VIC

Quilla June?

LEW smiles. It's always nice to have your plans appreciated.

LEW

... to be the recipient of ...

VIC

That bitch !!

MEZ

You watch your foul mouth, boy !
When anybody on this Committee
speaks, you just listen and keep ...

VIC

How'd you like a rifle jammed up
your ...

215. ANGLE

FAVOR the Committee.

LEW

Michael !!!

MICHAEL starts ...

VIC

Okay.

MEZ

Guttersnipe !

LEW

As I was saying:... to be the recipient
of an honor that occurs but once in
several decades. Mez, let me have the
original Elder's proclamation.

While she rattles her papers searching for it, LEW wanders

CONT.

215. CONTINUED

over to help himself to food laid out on table. He nibbles on chicken drumstick. MEZ hurries over with the paper - old, ragged, much used. LEV clears his throat, squints to read.

LEV

"The fruit of your loins will enable the productive citizenry of Topeka to overcome metabolic changes resulting from lengthy subterranean living, allow it to keep its leadership in the drive to remake this sinful world in God's own image."

That seems, to them to say it all. The Committee gathers around the food, proceeds to eat, pay no attention to VIC.

216. ANGLE

VIC. What the hell are they talking about? He moves, MICHAEL moves closer.

217. ANGLE

All have something to eat. They're comfortable.

LEV

We've been down here too long. Our women can't get pregnant. Every so often, we need new blood.

218. ANGLE

DOCTOR MOORE o.s.

We need a new man ... a certain special kind of man ...

VIC. The pieces are beginning to fit together. Or ... are they? Can he be this lucky? He starts to chuckle.

219. ANGLE

FULL. VIC giggles, laughs, roars. He sags to the floor in a fit of laughter. Tears run down his cheeks. His laughter bounces off the walls, fills the huge room. They eat.

VIC

You want me to knock up your broads !!!

CONT.

219. CONTINUED

They pick away at the food. Gasping for breath, VIC finally runs out of laughter. He struggles up, peeling off his clothes as he rises.

VIC

You talked me into it. Line 'em up !!

MEZ screams, chokes on chicken bone. Others eat. MICHAEL moves in.

CUT TO:

220. INT HOSPITAL CORRIDOR NIGHT

GIRLS. All in a line ... all in bridal gowns ... 2,5,10,35 of them. GIRLS. Beautiful, pretty, ugly, ungodly. GIRLS. Young, old. Tall, short. Thin, fat. GIRLS. Demurely seated, bouquets in hand, eyes fixed on something behind camera. Melodious BARBERSHOP QUARTET music.

MEZ o.s.

Next. Next, please.

Quiet is shattered as they squeal, giggle, push and shove for that honor.

221. INT HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

DOCTOR MOORE, doctor's white coat, tends white machine that is only partially visible. A couple of dials, two tanks, several gauges, it gives off soft pink glow, low hum-thunk.

PREACHER o.s.

... of whom the whole family in Heaven
and earth is named, bestow upon these,
Thy servants of the seal, Thine approval,
and Thy fatherly benediction: granting
unto them ...

PAN to FOLLOW 2 clear plastic tubes that lead from machine, pulsing with bubbled liquid, through room with white walls, ceiling, floor, instruments to point where they enter wall. PULL BACK to reveal we have been viewing through glass wall.

PREACHER o.s.

... grace to fulfill, with pure and steadfast affection, the vow and covenant between them made. Guide them together, we beseech
(more)

221. CONTINUED

PREACHER o.s.

Thee, in the way of righteousness and
peace, that, loving and serving Thee ...

CONTINUE FOLLOWING tubes into another room with white walls,
ceiling, floor, where white-masked NURSE tinkers with surgical
instruments on a white chest.

PREACHER o.s.

... with one heart and mind, all the days
of their life, they may be abundantly en-
riched with the tokens of Thy everlasting
favor. Amen.

REVEAL VIC in white pajamas, on white bed, with shiney brass
knobs atop each post, white sheets ... white restraining straps
prisoning him to the bed. Sections have been cut out on each
arm sleeve and crotch where tubes terminate. Immobilized com-
pletely, VIC can only dart eyes between PREACHER, all in black,
on one side of his bed and YOUNG LADY, in complete bridal out-
fit, buttressed by her PARENTS on the other side.

PREACHER

By the authority committed unto me, I
declare that you are now husband and
wife, according to the ordinances and
laws of the state of Topeka. Whom
therefore God hath joined together, let
no man put assunder. Amen.

The NEWLYWED is smothered with attention by her PARENTS. In
her joy, she giggles, clasps her hands, does little dance ...
and as an afterthought, plants a quick peck on VIC'S cheek.
NURSE hardly looks up as CAMERA PANS departing bridal party
to door. As the white door swings open, babble washes in.

222. INT HOSPITAL CORRIDOR NIGHT

BRIDAL PARTY moves by MICHAEL at the door to table where MEZ
and IRA confer with the next bridal-gown-clad GIRL and her
PARENTS. LEW, leaning heavily on his cane, sits on edge of
table talking with girl's FATHER. The waiting BRIDES and
their PARENTS form a line from the table to the far end of
the hall ... and around the corner. What with all of the
people waiting, the BARBERSHOP QUARTET singing, confusion is
rampant.

CONT.

222. CONTINUED

PREACHER

Mez, don't suppose you have anything
to soothe a much-used throat, do you?

MEZ stops PREACHER with her hand, finishes instructions to
waiting GIRL and her MOTHER.

MEZ

And be sure to have both parents sign
... right here. Now, let's see,
Brother Hassler.

Begins to fumble in her purse.

FATHER

Well, Lew, my bible says nothing about
condoning artificial insemination.

LEW

Chapter 1, verse 22, Mayor ... "and God
blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and
multiply." "God blessed them." That's
the key. That's why The Elders insisted
that ...

DOLLY the NEWLYWED and her PARENTS as they move past the
table, start down the hall.

223. ANGLE

DOLLY with them through crowd as the NEWLYWED is kissed, hugged,
teased, congratulated. Her PARENTS get more of the same. But
not everybody is happy, convinced, or cares a hang. Mingled
with the general atmosphere of happy times HEAR:

#1 MAN

Heart failures?! Both Fannie and
Jorden?! At the same time?! Don't
give me ...

#1 WOMAN

You'd just better watch what you're
saying, Jon Purcell ... less you want
the Committee looking into your health.

Giggles, laughter. DOLLY.

CONT.

223. CONTINUED

#2 WOMAN

... don't care if the wedding ceremony is ridiculous. Would you have our Annie pregnant without having a husband?!

NEWLYWED and PARENTS scoot around the corner, out of sight. HOLD. HEAR more squeals, clever remarks. PICK UP and DOLLY with white-masked, white-uniformed NURSE who comes around corner, makes her way through the waiting, gossiping crowd.

#2 MAN

Seems the Committee'd plan some better ...

#3 WOMAN

Indeed! Just copy-cating what The Elders did, exactly!! No changes ...
no ...

DOLLY the NURSE by the table, MICHAEL, and into VIC'S room.

224. INT HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

Arriving NURSE (#2) moves to NURSE (#1) working with instruments.

NURSE #2

Need you in Emergency ... right away.

NURSE #1 speeds out the door as NURSE #2 smoothly picks up the unfinished work. A beat, and NURSE #2 alters her operations to search through drawers, search for something in the room, finally fixing on the shiney brass knobs on the bed. VIC pays no attention. She shakes one of the knobs, seems satisfied, moves to open door to room with DOCTOR MOORE and machine.

NURSE #2

Could you help me please, Doctor.

DOCTOR MOORE mumbles something about being "right there," continues to monitor the machine. NURSE #2 moves back to the bed. DOCTOR MOORE enters.

DOCTOR MOORE

What seems to be the problem, nurse.

NURSE #2

I don't know, really. Would you take a look.

CONT.

224. CONTINUED

The DOCTOR moves to oblige. Head down, he bends over VIC. NURSE #2 makes sure his attention is fixed, it is, and she lifts the brass knob off the bed and raps DOCTOR MOORE. He flops across the bed, and goes very down. NURSE #2 replaces knob, steps over the prostrate body, leans out door into hall.

NURSE #2

Doctor Moore's out right now. Says
to wait 10 minutes.

She closes the door, clicks the lock on, lowers the mask ...
QUILLA JUNE. She pays little attention to the softly moaning
DOCTOR, moves to strip tubes and straps from bug-eyed VIC.
As she works,

QJ

Couldn't find a gun. Only one way out.
Michael, by the door, to the right. We
go left, by the desk, through the crowd.
They'll come unglued if we run straight
at them ... I hope. End of hall, right,
big door. Outside? Haven't the slight-
est idea.

Efficient as a machine to free him, she dissolves as he sits,
cries into his chest, makes little fists and beats on his back,
runs her words all together.

QJ

Oh, Vic, I'm sorry, so sorry, I didn't
mean to, I had to, I was sent out to,
I was so scared, and I love you !

Suddenly, he doesn't want to kill her at all. He wants to hold
her. He does ... then has second thoughts, flings her away.

VIC

Don't give me that crap !!

He searches DOCTOR MOORE for weapons, flips him on bed, straps
him down. Authority jumps back into QUILLA JUNE'S voice, whisp-
ered voice crackles.

QJ

Be quiet or we'll never get out of here !

No way he's going to believe her ... but his voice drops to a

CONT.

224. CONTINUED

whisper as he searches for a weapon.

VIC

You're as crazy as the rest of
these nuts !

He hefts found objects for weight, usefulness, rummages
drawers. She follows closely as they spit at each other.

QJ

They may be crazy, but they're not
dumb ... a distinction you can't
claim when you don't have Blood to
hold your hand !

VIC

Oh yeah ... they get me down here to
make babies, then hook me to a stupid
machine ... that's real smart !!

Finds a scalpel. It's little, but sharp. Looks some more.

QJ

They've done it before. The machine
takes what they want, kills you when
you can't give any more, impregnates
us girls ... and they don't have
idiots like you running around loose!

That gives him pause ... momentarily. He slips pillow cover
off, drops brass knob in, hefts it ... yeah, that'll do.

VIC

So you wiggled your butt, teased me
down to their great big welcome !

QJ

I had to !

VIC

Sure !

QJ

The Committee threatened to kill my
parents if I didn't do ...

VIC

Your parents are so precious ...
(more)

224. CONTINUED

VIC

... how come you're here now ?!

Tears begin to leak out of her. He's flustered.

225. ANGLE

VIC

What's the matter?

QJ

They killed them anyway. I asked questions, we're not supposed to ...

VIC

Hey ... I'm sorry.

She crumbles to him. He holds her tight. KNOCK on door.

PREACHER o.s.

Doc?

VIC gestures for her to stall.

QJ

Just a minute, Reverend.

VIC gets his weapons ready.

VIC

Let's give 'em hell !

She smiles her agreement, he snatches the door open, and they charge out.

226. INT HOSPITAL CORRIDOR NIGHT

VIC, holding tight to the petrified QUILLA JUNE, swoops out the door. LEW leaps up, steadying himself with his cane. Heads turn. VIC kicks the cane, sending the old devil down in a heap, turns the table over on startled IRA, MEZ, PREACHER, and WAITING BRIDAL PARTY. Over his shoulder as he runs,

VIC

Doc's down. The Good Lord got him in the head!

CONT.

226. CONTINUED

MICHAEL pursues, only to be blocked from his quarry by the struggling mass of bodies, cane, desk, and chairs on floor.

LEW

Do something, God damn it !

227. ANGLE

The crowd panics. In trying to take VIC, they get in each others way. VIC and QUILLA JUNE are making headway.

228. ANGLE

Crowd gathers its senses, starts to press in, is warded off by the slashing scalpel. VIC and QUILLA JUNE turn corner.

229. ANGLE

More crowd, confusion. VIC and QUILLA JUNE are through the door and gone.

CUT TO:

230. INT COMMITTEE OFFICE NIGHT

Quiet. In f.g., locked glass case holding VIC'S confiscated weapons. PAN to see through window. VIC and QUILLA JUNE run through some shrubbery, she points toward CAMERA, and they hustle towards us. The glass front doors shatter with one kick and a chair through the glass front of the case gives them the weapons. VIC loads a couple of shells in his rifle, slaps a clip in the automatic, tosses it to QUILLA JUNE, pockets his spike, knife, and sling shot, crams more shells in his rifle as they head for the door.

231. EXT COMMITTEE OFFICE NIGHT

VIC, QUILLA JUNE spill out, swing to run ... and here comes MICHAEL like a whippet, still smiling. VIC throws QUILLA JUNE out of the line of action, drops to one knee.

232. ANGLE

He wraps the sling around a forearm, sights clean, fires.

233. ANGLE

MICHAEL explodes in a shower of sparks and rams into a tree.

CONT.

233. CONTINUED

One arm dangles uselessly, one leg is at a crazy angle with wires hanging out, but the robot still continues to limp-walk in place, kept from progress by the tree.

234. ANGLE

This encounter and its success seems to release something in VIC ... he goes on a spree. He shoots windows out, signs down. He kicks garbage cans over and doors in.

235. ANGLE

He blows tires out on a couple of cars, riddles the engines, enjoys the fire that covers them. He spins to ...

236. ANGLE

... rush into path of a horse-drawn carriage, sending the animal into wild-eyed flight, and petrifying the occupants. Noise surges to him, he looks o.s.

237. POV

Here comes the crowd from the hospital, led by LEW hobbling along on his cane like some kind of weird grasshopper.

238. ANGLE

With great delight, VIC drops to his knees, begins to sweep the rifle up ... and ducks as shots boom. Remembering QUILLA JUNE and the .45, he looks to locate her.

239. POV

On a porch on the second floor, there she is, the automatic down on the railing like a pro, sighting into the mob, snapping off shots.

240. ANGLE

VIC tosses a couple of shots, takes off.

241. ANGLE

QUILLA JUNE, firing, smiling, laughing.

242. POV

LEW, still hobbling on his cane, still leading. DOCTOR

CONT.

242. CONTINUED

MOORE, IRA, and MEZ close behind. BRIDES, PARENTS, TOWNS-PEOPLE thunder along behind. Many have armed themselves and everybody is screaming. One of their number goes down. All are ducking for cover, pressing forward.

243. ANGLE

VIC drops down beside QUILLA JUNE to add his firepower.

244. ANGLE

Crowd moving in. IRA goes down ... and DOCTOR MOORE.

245. ANGLE

QUILLA JUNE zeroes in on target. VIC fires, sees her actions out of corner of his eye.

246. ANGLE

Through the sights of her gun ... LEW. Track him, jerk of recoil, see him do a little dance step and keep coming.

247. ANGLE

VIC has slammed the back of her head to make her miss.

QJ

You made me miss !

VIC smiles, begins to sight, very carefully.

VIC

Uh-huh. He's mine.

248. POV

LEW has gained protection of tree where MICHAEL continues to limp-walk. MAN with gun slides in next to LEW, begins to fire. LEW concentrates on staying behind tree, deployment of his forces.

249. ANGLE

Slugs are ripping the railing. VIC and QUILLA JUNE have stopped firing.

250. ANGLE

TOWNSPEOPLE dart from cover to cover, firing from concealment, continue to pinch VIC and QUILLA JUNE in.

251. ANGLE

VIC sees their position is getting shaky ... and they're running low on ammunition.

252. ANGLE

LEW is slowly regaining control. His forces are organized, moving in.

253. POV

VIC and QUILLA JUNE are pinned down. Can't see them at the moment, but they're there. PAN RIGHT. TOWNSPEOPLE move in.

254. ANGLE

LEW knows he has the upper hand. MAN with gun still with him.

255. POV

Area to left of where VIC and QUILLA JUNE are nailed. JEWEL PAN as VIC, unarmed, leaps down to ground, sprints wildly to get away from QUILLA JUNE. Cursing and spitting mad, she stands and pumps rifle shot after rifle shot at VIC. Screaming for help, he streaks along as near misses kick up dirt around his feet, nick trees by his head.

256. ANGLE

LEW is confused. What the hell is happening? Then realizes something has happened between VIC and QUILLA JUNE and that he may yet save VIC for the impregnation. He screams for TOWNSPEOPLE to concentrate on QUILLA JUNE, waves the wildly dodging VIC towards safety of the tree where he cowers.

LEW

Over here, boy, over here !!

Welcoming any port in this storm, VIC heads for LEW and makes the cover of the tree in one last flying lunge to sprawl at LEW'S feet. MAN with gun swings it to cover VIC.

LEW

Take her ! Dead or alive ...

257. ANGLE

LEW

... take her! I've got this ...

VIC rolls over, jerks out pistol, shoves it into LEW'S gut.

VIC

Ok, wetbrain, let's see if we can't trade you for a way outta here.

LEW'S eyes pop, MAN with gun doesn't know what to do.

CUT TO:

258. EXT DROPSHAFT NIGHT

Portal irises open. VIC backs out dragging LEW by collar. QUILLA JUNE scurries out. Portal hisses shut. Using LEW as a shield, VIC and QUILLA JUNE wait for pursuit that may spew out of the dropshaft any second.

VIC

Blood ?!

No response. Didn't really expect one, but God could he use the dog now.

VIC

Blood ???!

No luck. In a fit of anger, VIC jerks the collar around LEW'S throat even tighter, shakes him, hisses in his ear.

VIC

You kept me down there too long, he's gone.

Tight as a 2 dollar watchspring they wait. QUILLA JUNE snuggles closer. Pressure eases off a bit.

VIC

They don't seem to want you back, do they?

Jostles the hapless LEW till he shakes his head in agreement.

259. ANGLE

LEW'S a problem ... but not a big one.

CONT.

259. CONTINUED

VIC

So whadda we do with ya, big Lew?

LEW expects no mercy since he wouldn't give any.

QJ

Maybe they'll leave us alone if ...

Funny thought brushes VIC.

VIC

Whadda you think, Doctor Moore? Oh, little wild thumpin' a the heart, to be expected. Most marked finding is the yellow streak up his back. In other words, he's scared out of his wits ... as you might have noticed.

260. ANGLE

FAVOR LEW, eyes rolled, whites showing, trying to see what VIC is doing.

VIC

Final removal ... immediately.

His gun comes up to LEW'S ear, pressure put on trigger. LEW grips his cane like a club. He's gonna go, but he's going to leave his mark.

QJ

Vic ... don't !

261. ANGLE

A thought squirms through VIC.

VIC

Wait a minute. We could use a special kind of man up here. Kind that can appreciate what it's like to fight to stay alive, dodge screamers, starve a little, be cold and wet and scared... and lonely. A man that'd run like a son of a bitch if he's turned loose, not try to get back to Topeka 'cause he'd find a bunch of holes shot in him.

CONT.

261. CONTINUED

Gunshots pound. VIC has lifted the dropshaft entry card, shot it full of holes, tossed it away. LEW gets message. Edits.

262. ANGLE

LEW. Hobbling along on his cane, picking his way. Fragile. Alone.

263. ANGLE

For the first time in quite a while the pressure of immediacy is off. But ... they've got no food, no water, precious little ammo, QUILLA JUNE'S gonna be a burden till she learns the ropes ... and there's no BLOOD. And that's the worst of all.

QJ

We'd better hurry, Vic. Please. They might come up the dropshaft.

VIC recedes into himself, lost in deep thought.

VIC

"Over the hill" ... that's where.

QJ

What?

VIC

That's where Blood went ... when I was gone so long.

He drifts off again.

QJ

Let's catch up with him.

VIC

Don't know where it is.

How 'bout that.

QJ

If Blood knew, why didn't he tell you.

Logical question ... he takes awfully long time to answer.

VIC

He don't ... doesn't know either.

CONT.

263. CONTINUED

He smiles to himself that he's corrected his own mistake, then realizes she's completely confused.

264. ANGLE

He gestures broadly, indicating all they can see ... and more.

VIC

It's out there, somewhere. We'd heard 'bout it, talked 'bout it. He wanted us to go find it, make a new start ... I kidded him a lot, but he hung in there, made me say we'd least go look ... I didn't really mean it ...

BLOOD FO o.s.
(barely audible, weak)

Vic.

VIC

... but I would now if ...

His head turns, listening for what he knows he can't have heard. Starts to speak again, but his head's someplace else. He exits, readying his gun.

265. ANGLE

The tall, featureless pillar punches the night sky as VIC carefully inches around it. QUILLA JUNE is slightly behind.

266. ANGLE

It must be his imagination, or a trap. VIC eases to ECU. He peers o.s. ... and damn near swallows his teeth.

267. POV

BLOOD ... festering wounds, blood-matted hair, starvation caved sides. Still.

268. ANGLE

PAN VIC to kneel and tenderly lift his friend's battered head.

BLOOD FO

Hey.

CONT.

268. CONTINUED

God Almighty. VIC wants to laugh, shout. Instead,

VIC FO
We made it back, man.

QUILLA JUNE moves up to smile at the reunion. VIC runs a quick appraisal of the dog's condition, and he's worried.

VIC FO
How long since you've had any food?

BLOOD needs time to think, answer.

BLOOD FO
Grabbed a lizard yesterday ...
or maybe the day before ...

VIC'LL take care of that. Begins to lift BLOOD.

VIC
We've gotta leg it into the
city, get him some food.

Desperation gives the dog strength.

BLOOD FO
Don't. Found out we weren't fried ...
came out, be back ... wouldn't stay
night, don't blame 'em. You don't
know what it's like out here at night.

Just the thought shivers his body. VIC eases him down.

VIC FO
Ok, take it easy.

269. ANGLE

BLOOD, having one hell of a time.

BLOOD FO
We're marked lousy in the city ... can't
go back, have to make it someplace else.

VIC FO o.s.
How 'bout "over the hill," Tiger.

CONT.

269. CONTINUED

He's got problems, but that brings a smile.

BLOOD FO

You bet.

270. ANGLE

QUILLA JUNE. VIC rises from his o.s. friend.

VIC

He's gotta have food.

QJ

Where do we get it?

VIC

Don't know, but I've gotta find some, fast, 'cause we can't make it up here without him.

QJ

But there's nothing out here to eat ... and Topcka's out of the question ... and Blood says we don't dare try the city ...

VIC doesn't hear her. His mind's spinning, he's on to a solution.

CUT TO:

271. EXT DROPSHAFT SUNRISE

HOLD just long enough to see coals of small fire still giving off shimmering heat, small roasting spit. PAN VIC, BLOOD, and QUILLA JUNE moving away, into a sunrise that is glorious. Still pretty stiff, an overall-bandaged BLOOD manages to ease along in spite of his stomach which is now puffed out from eating, and eating ... and eating.

VIC FO

... and when Lew told me ...

BLOOD sways, sags to ground. QUILLA JUNE stoops to see if she can help. VIC leans on LEW'S cane.

QJ FO

Still kinda shaky, huh?

CONT.

271. CONTINUED

BLOOD gets back to his feet, moves on.

VIC FO

Sure you had enough to eat?

Voice is still weak, but the old snap is back in BLOOD'S tone.

BLOOD FO

Any more, I'd have to be rolled along.

They see he's going to make it, ease after.

QJ FO

We find a place that's safe, I'll fix you what's left.

VIC FO

Anyway, when Lew told me why they wanted me down there, I damn near busted a gut laughin'. Them dummies, out of all the horny bastards up here, he'd picked me !

Moving on, picking up speed, firmness, determination. They begin to swagger a bit. HOLD their progress as they get smaller ... and smaller ... and ...

BLOOD FO

Well ... 'least he had good taste.

The dog begins to snicker ... is joined by VIC and QUILLA JUNE'S low laughter, as we ...

. BRING UP MUSIC,

. RUN END TITLES,

and

FADE OUT.